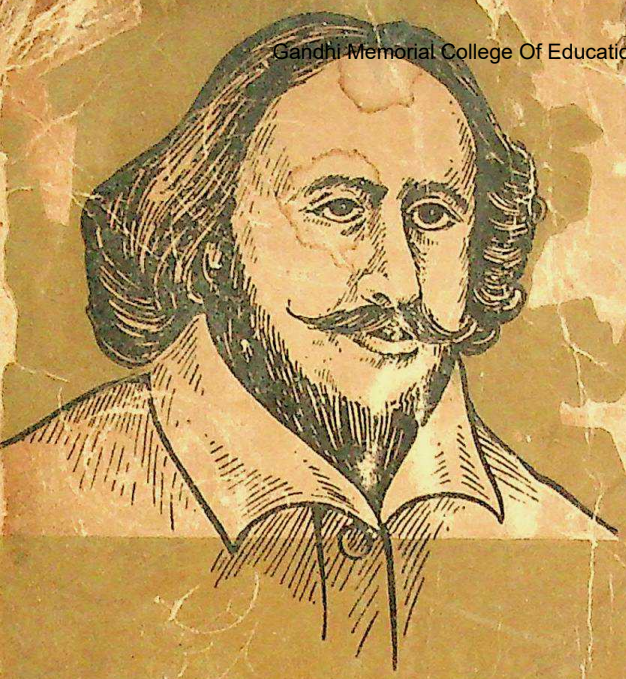
Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu



Shakespeare's

HAMLET

DR. B. B. J

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Fredman Krishen Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

A CRITICAL SURVEY

OF

SHAKESPEARE'S

HAMLET

[*Introduction, Text with Paraphrase and Notes, etc.*]

Edited by

DR B. B. JAIN, M.A., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English,

Agra College,

AGRA

M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B
Moojyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190002
KASHMIR

(Third Revised and Enlarged Edition)

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 2722(D)
Dated 14/11/2015

RATAN PRAKASHAN MANDIR

EDUCATIONAL & UNIVERSITY PUBLISHERS

H. O. : **Hospital Road, AGRA-3**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Price :
Rupees Nine only

Published by :
RATAN PRAKASHAN MANDIR
Head Office : AGRA-3

Branches :

AGRA-2 : NEW MARKET, RAJA MANDI ★ DELHI-6 : 5693, NAI SARAK, 1ST FLOOR, PIPALWALI KOTHI ★ INDORE : GORAKUND ★ JAIPUR : DHAMANI MARKET, CHAURA RASTA ★ KANPUR : TILAK HALL LANE, MESTON ROAD ★ LUCKNOW : AMINABAD, GUNGEYNABAB PARK ★ MEERUT : 136, COLLEGE ROAD (CHIPI TANK) ★ PATNA-4 : KHAZANCHI ROAD.

Printed by :
Prem Chand Jain at Prem Electric Press,
1/11, M.G. Road, Agra–2

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
1.	The Elizabethan Age	1
2.	The Elizabethan—Stage Conditions	3
3.	Shakespeare's Audience ...	6
4.	Life of William Shakespeare ...	8
5.	Shakespeare's Literary Career ...	13
6.	Classification of Shakespeare's Plays ...	16
7.	The Sequence of Shakespeare's Plays ...	18
8.	Shakespeare's English ...	20
9.	Shakespeare's Use of Rhyme in His Plays ...	22
10.	Shakespeare's Use of Prose in His Plays ...	23
11.	Shakespeare as a Dramatist and a Poet ...	24
12.	Shakespeare's Indebtedness ...	26
13.	Shakespeare's Conception of Tragedy ...	28
14.	The Shakespearean Tragic Hero ...	31
15.	Conflict in the Shakespearean Tragedy ...	34
16.	Plot-Construction of the Shakespearean Tragedy ...	35
17.	Shakespeare's Use of the Supernatural in His Dramas ...	37
18.	The Sources of Hamlet ...	42
19.	The Date of Composition of Hamlet ...	44
20.	Hamlet as a Tragedy ...	44
21.	Hamlet—a Tragedy of Thought or Action ? ...	47
22.	Hamlet as a Play of Unresolved Problems ...	50
23.	Poetic Justice in Hamlet ...	51
24.	The Supernatural in Hamlet ...	53
25.	Hamlet and the Elizabethan Stage ...	57
26.	Local Colour in Hamlet ...	58
27.	Contemporary References and Allusions in Hamlet ...	60
28.	Stages of Action in Hamlet ...	62
29.	Dramatic Significance of the Opening Scene in Hamlet ...	64
30.	Problem of Delay in Hamlet ...	65
31.	Soliloquies in Hamlet ...	68
32.	Soliloquies of Claudius ...	71
33.	Play within the Play in Hamlet	73

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CHAPTER		PAGE
34. Comic Scenes in Hamlet	...	76
35. Problem of Hamlet's Madness	...	77
36. Psychological Importance of the Play within the Play	...	79
37. Dramatic Significance of the Scene of Hamlet's Meeting with His Mother	...	80
38. Dramatic Significance of Hamlet's Surrender to Claudius	...	81
39. Relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia	...	83
40. Dramatic Significance of the 'Grave-diggers' Scene in Hamlet	...	85
41. Hamlet's Egotism	...	87
42. The Problem of Character and Destiny in Hamlet	...	89
43. Inconsistencies in Hamlet	...	91
44. Hamlet—an Intellectual Drama	...	93
45. Hamlet as an Artistic Failure	...	94
Important Characters in the Play :		
1. Hamlet	...	98
2. Claudius	...	103
3. Polonius	...	107
4. Gertrude	...	110
5. Ophelia	...	113
6. Laertes	...	119
7. Horatio	...	121
8. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	...	123
9. Fortinbras	...	125
10. The Clowns or the Grave-Diggers	...	126
Hamlet—Text with Paraphrase	...	**130-315**
Notes	...	**319-467**
Explanations of Important Passages	...	**469-504**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

HAMLET

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1

The Elizabethan Age

Period of Renaissance. The Elizabethan Age in which Shakespeare lived and wrote is justly described as the golden period in the history of England. With the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne of England in 1558, the whole of the country blossomed forth like a fresh flower radiating into a thousand petals. After a long chaotic period of turmoil and upheavals, Queen Elizabeth restored public safety, confidence and freedom from care. England took a sigh of relief and Englishmen found the long-coveted leisure to sit and study and meditate over deeper truths of human life and the universe. The Renaissance was at its full swing—renaissance not only in literature but also in religion, society, politics, commerce and science alike.

Spirit of Adventure. It was an age of overflowing energy and spirit. Man sought to break away from the fetters of human body and social and political bondages to face the sun, to touch the sky, to reach the moon and to talk to the stars. The keynote of the age was 'adventure'. People revelled in bloodshed murder, violence and vengeance on the one hand, and in bravery, heriosm, chivalry and sacrifice on the other. Shakespeare describes the spirit of the age in Hamlet in the following pregnant passage.

> "What a piece of work is man : How noble in reason : how infinite in faculties, in form how moving : how expressable and admirable in action : how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god : the beauty of the world : the paragon of animals.

Naturally, therefore, we find that Shakespeare's comedies abound in chivalry, romance, adventure and youth, and his tragedies are full of murders, bloodshed, vengeance, oppressions, atrocities and madness. This is what the age demanded and this is what Shakespeare bountifully supplied.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Peace and Prosperity. Art and literature can grow only in an atmosphere of peace, order and prosperity. The Elizabethan Age assured all the three requisites. In the world of religion, the long consuming controversy between Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism was settled and peace established. The Reformation in religion had been accomplished and therefore perfect peace and calm prevailed in the country.

It was the age when trade and commerce of the country were also revolutionised. With the dissolution of monasteries there was a huge increase in the national wealth. The manufacture of glassware, pillows, cushions and carpets was newly introduced in the country. People were overjoyed to have such unprecedented and undreamt of comforts and luxuries.

It was also the age of great and glorious national victories. England defeated France and subdued Spain in the historic Battle of Armada. A number of internal Dukes and Barons who had been revolting from time to time against the British sovereignty and claiming their independence were all crushed. England enjoyed internal peace and order on the one hand, and on the other commanded foremost respect and influence over the continent. Tidal waves of nationalism flowed throughout the country. This accounts for so many historical plays written by Shakespeare. Songs of glory were sung in praise of England. Shakespeare speaks through the lips of Richard II :

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise !
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea !
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England !"

The narrow insular geographical boundaries were melting away and new islands and continents were discovered in quick succession.

An age of Discoveries. The vast continent of America together with her rich gold mines was discovered and added to the dominion of England. Sailors returned with adventurous and fictitious tales of their meetings with fairies and demons and filled the English atmosphere with unprecedented thrill and magic. *The Tempest* may be cited as a direct outcome of this new spirit which had taken England in its grip.

Along with all these new discoveries and inventions, there also emerged above the mundane plane of the earth intercourse with stars. Scholars were irresistibly drawn by the lore of the luminary heavenly bodies.

CC-0. Panjab Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"A star looks down at me
And says, "Here I and you
Stand, each in our degree
What do you mean to do ?"

And the man replied, "I mean to conquer you." Stars were really conquered in the Elizabethan Age, revealing new mysteries of heaven and earth.

Classical learning. With all these favourable conditions for the growth of arts and literature, there started a vogue of classical studies and scholarship. The curiosity, excitement, wonder and imagination having been roused by the above factors, a literary shape was given to them by the supreme and perfect examples of great classical masters of Greece and Italy. In no time England was turned into a vernal grove of singing birds.

2

The Elizabethan Stage-Conditions and their Influence on Shakespeare's Dramas

Dependence of Drama on the Stage. A play without audience and actors is inconceivable. Therefore a dramatist has to adapt his plays to the conditions of the stage on which they have to be performed, to the actors who are to act them and to the audience who are to witness them. Shakespeare's dramas, accordingly, were greatly influenced by the conditions of the Elizabethan stage. The Elizabethan audience had no experience of the elaborate construction and decorations of the modern stage. Therefore, Shakespeare had to regulate his plays in accordance with the crude representation and limitations of the stage available in those primitive days.

Pre-Shakespearean Stage. Prior to the Elizabethan age, there was, really speaking, no fixed stage in the sense we understand the term today. Although dramatic art had long established itself as an important profession in England, the stage was not yet fixed. There were strolling theatrical companies which carried their simple and crude stage from place to place. The stage was just a simple affair ; a kind of open tent with two side-doors, one serving for 'entrance' and the other for 'exit', with a small door in between the two serving the purpose of 'inner' stage. When Shakespeare arrived in London about 1585, the Elizabethan stage was in the state of final evolution.

Elizabethan Theatres. There were three kinds of theatres in London when Shakespeare reached there (i) Public theatres, (ii) Private theatres, (iii) the Halls of Royal Palaces and the Inns of Court. The Curtain, the Theatre and the Newington Butts were the three public theatres to which was added the Rose two years later (1587). They were either circular or octagonal in shape, with a raised dais in the centre. They were open overhead and performances took place in broad daylight. Shakespeare's plays were performed

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

in all these theatres. Many of his plays were also performed in private theatres and a few in the Royal Palaces too.

It was in 1599 that the Globe Theatre in which Shakespeare himself had a share was constructed. It became the permanent headquarters of the Shakespearean Theatrical Company. It was the most typical play-house of the Elizabethan age. An analysis of its structure can give an idea of the common Elizabethan play-house. It was circular in structure and the inside yard was open to the sky. It was surrounded by three tiers of galleries overlooking the main stage in the centre. There was a circular area known as the 'pit' around the stage. There was no seats in the pit and, therefore, poor spectators called the 'groundlings' kept standing throughout the performance. More fashionable and respectable spectators sat on seats arranged in the three galleries, one over the other. The uppermost gallery was covered with a thatched roof. The tickets varied from one penny in the 'pit' to 2s. 6d. in the highest gallery. The distinguished spectators sat on the stage itself.

Structure of the Stage. The stage proper was technically called the 'apron stage'. It comprised the following main parts : First, there was an outstretched rectangular platform. The 'groundlings' stood on three sides of it. Above it were thatched roof and hangings but no side or front curtains. In the floor was a hidden trap-door which was usually kept closed and through which occasionally ascended or descended ghosts and witches as in *Macbeth.* Secondly, at the back of the stage on either side there were two doors by which the characters entered and disappeared. Between the doors there used to be a small recess behind a thin curtain. The recess formed a kind of inner stage to present certain scenes as 'behind'. It represented, for example, the bed-chamber of Desdemona, the cell of Prospero, the cave of King Lear or the tomb of Juliet. Thirdly, over the recess there was the upper stage or a balcony, technically called 'the heavens' which was used for 'tiring-house' or for representing upper scenes as the balcony of Juliet's bed-chamber, a curtain being hung from the balcony to conceal or disclose the 'recess' below.

Lack of scenic effect. The stage usually lacked in scenic arrangements. There was acute scarcity of scenery. Bradbrook writes : "The stage had properties but no scenery ; the trees of the popular orchard or woodland set, whether real or not, must have provided rather thin illusion, and this was certainly the most elaborate scene of the early stage. Spectacle replaced scenery". Among the properties of the stage a few typical things were a human head, a grave, a lion, an artificial moon, a bush or a flower plant which were so comties of the stage a few typical things were a human head, a grave, a monly required in Shakespeare's plays. The costumes of the actors were gaudy, rich and expensive. But they were all Elizabethan costumes irrespective of the period and country where the action of the drama took place. Harrison says, "Shakespeare was no archaeologist ; as the medieval artists who gave us the wall paintings and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

sculptures for our churches, represented Pilate's Roman soldier in plate armour ; so his Romans in *Coriolanus*, for example, carry pistols, are put in the stocks, say grace before meat and generally behave and look like the Elizabethans who watched them performed. Costume was a means of indicating rank and office more than time and place ; it was meant to reveal the characters than the setting of the story."

Lack of Female Actresses. Female actresses had not yet appeared on the stage. The parts of female characters were therefore played by young men who appeared on the stage in foppish and gaudy female costumes. Considering the large number of female characters in Shakespeare's plays, it may be safely inferred that young men must have played the female roles perfectly in the Elizabethan age. Yet in order to compensate the dearth of actresses, Shakespeare often contrived to represent his heroines in comedies disguised as men. Instances may be cited from his comedies—Portia playing the part of the judge, Rosalind visiting her lover as a young shepherd, and Viola serving as the boy-messenger of Duke Orsino. In addition to this, Shakespeare also avoided very sensational scenes of love lest they should arouse ridicule. Granville Barker observes, "There is, when one comes to examine the point, quite extraordinarily little intimate love-making in Shakespeare. How often, that is how seldom, do we want to insert the stage direction 'they kiss' ? It will be found, I think, that Shakespeare almost always interposes some sort of barrier as the balcony in *Romeo and Juliet* or an intellectual barrier, as with Beatrice and Benedick, who are always at wit's rapiers' distance and so on. Also as a minor point, Shakespeare uses circumstances for occasional effect as when Cleopatra thinks of a squeaking Cleopatra boying her greatness, or Rosalind delivers an epilogue much of which is pointless on the modern stage."

Flexibility. Flexibility was another important characteristic of the Elizabethan stage. This flexibility was at once an invitation to licence. Time and place could be neglected or telescoped to serve a dramatic purpose. The Elizabethan stage was free from any suggestions of particular locality or time. Bradbrook writes "The unlocalized dreams allowed Shakespeare to indulge in loose flowing construction, episodic plots, and complex action. It is responsible for most of those features of his plays which appeared to be faults to the eighteenth century, and for the fact that he was largely unplayable in the nineteenth century. This vagueness of place may have been encouraged by the frequency with which allegorical figures were allowed to move on the same plane as a human being in the plays, which confused the sense of time and place." To the audience the stage was stage—it represented nowhere and therefore everywhere.

Effects on Shakespeare's Art. The absence of scenery had far-reaching effects on the construction and style of Shakespeare's plays. The absence of scenery led Shakespeare to have comparatively short scenes which could be quickly changed. It put a great limitation

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

upon the ways in which a Shakespearean scene or act could terminate. The drop-curtains were unknown in the Elizabethan age. Therefore at the end of each scene the actors had either to walk away or were carried off the stage, leaving it empty. For this reason an Elizabethan Scene or Act could not end on a climax. Even the most overwhelming scenes of Shakespeare close relatively quietly and the stage is usually cleared at the close of each scene. Another method of indicating the close of a Shakespearean scene was the use of a rhyming couplet at the end. The rhymed couplet was believed to ring the death-knell of the Scene or the Act.

The lack of scenic effect was made good by the poet by gorgeous descriptions and superfine pieces of poetry. Had there been elaborate scenery on the Elizabethan stage, we would have missed much of the rich descriptive poetry of Shakespeare The actors had to use highly emotional and exalted poetry in order to arouse the emotions of the spectators. With a view that this kind of poetic style may not look incongruous in the day-to-day world, Shakespeare has taken care to place his scenes in far-off lands like Venice or Sicily or in the land of his own imagination haunted by angels and fairies as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* The wonderful poetry of Shakespeare "caused him to make up for the deficiency of the scenery by his wonderful descriptions of landscapes, castles and wild moors. All that poetry would have been lost had he painted scenery at his disposal."

Conclusion. All these peculiarities of the stage and its limitations had marked influences on the structure, action and even style of Shakespeare's dramas. Shakespeare wrote his plays primarily for the stage. Ben Jonson rightly hailed him as "the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage." Thomas Carlyle regretted that Shakespeare's dramatic skill had to be curbed down to the limitations of the Globe Theatre ; "his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould."

3

Shakespeare's Audience

Audience as the Patron of the Drama. 'The drama's rules the drama's patrons give'. In other words, the audience, which is the real 'patrons' of the drama, goes a long way in determining the form and spirit of drama. In order to enter into the spirit of Shakespeare's dramatic art, it is essential, therefore, to understand the nature and characteristics of the audience for which Shakespeare wrote his dramas.

Two Classes of Audience. The Elizabethan audience for which Shakespeare wrote his plays was of a most heterogenous kind. It comprised two distinct classes of people whom we may conveniently characterize as the 'vulgar' and the 'refined'. To the former class belonged all sorts of vulgar and uncultured people like sailors,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

soldiers, thieves, pickpockets, cheats and immoral men and women. The other part of the audience comprised educated men and women, respectable businessman and public officers, critics and scholars and, at times, members of royal families. Shakespeare and all other contemporary playwrights had to cater for the tastes of both the classes.

The Vulgar Class. It was the class of 'the vulgar' which formed the bulk of the audience in public theatres. They generally stood in the pit round the stage or sat in the gallery above. They were the most noisy persons of whom even the actors were afraid. Brandes gives a very lively description of this class of audience in the following words ; "The frequenters of the pit, with their coarse boisterousness, were the terror of the actors. They all had to stand, coal-heavers and bricklayers, dock-labourers, serving men and idlers. Refreshment-sellers-moved about among them, supplying them with sausages and with apples and nuts. They ate and drank, drew corks, smoked tobacco, fought with each order, and often when they were out of humour threw fragments of food and even stones at the actors. Now and then they would come to loggerheads with fine gentlemen on the stage, so that the performance had to be interrupted and the theatre closed. The sanitary arrangements were of the most primitive description, and the groundlings resisted all attempts at reform on the part of the management. When the evil smells became intolerable, juniper berries were burnt by way of refreshing the atmosphere."

The Refined Gentry. The refined gentry usually sat on chairs close to the stage and sometimes upon the stage itself. There were special boxes for every high officials and public men. Ladies usually came with silken masks drawn over their faces. Foppish and very fashionable ladies generally occupied the first row. But the Elizabethan theatre was usually a scene of most boisterous actions and obscene remarks and therefore highly respectable ladies did not usually visit 'public' theatres. There were 'private' theatres to cater for the demand of this class of the Elizabethan audience.

Delighted in Melodramatic Scenes. The Elizabethan audience, as a rule, revelled in boisterous scenes of murders, bloodshed, vengeance, oppressions, and afrocities. They patronized what we call melodramatic plays. This explains the recurrence of too many melodramatic scenes in Shakespeare's tragedies. The ingratitude of Macbeth, the frailty of Hamlet's mother, the suspicious nature of Othello, the inhumanity of Regan and Goneril and so many other scenes of murder, bloodshed and battles, were not repulsive to most of the Elizabethan audience. They rather delighted in them. They highly appreciated Marlowe's *Tamberlaine* which is nothing but a long succession of inhuman murders and battles.

Vogue of Theatres. Thus theatres were very much in vogue in the Elizabethan England. For the spectators, in general, theatres were not merely places of amusement and entertainment but also of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

social gathering and instruction. The theatres served the purpose of newspapers, magazines and journals. The Elizabethan dramas, being the mirror of the age, exhibited to the public what was going on in England and abroad. What Francis Bacon said of 'Studies', he might well have said of the dramas of his age, as serving "for delight, for ornament and for ability."

4

Life of William Shakespeare

Mist of Doubts and Conjectures. Shakespeare's life is shrouded in a thick mist of doubts, conjectures and apprehensions. The biographers and commentators of Shakespeare have been arduously hunting for authentic facts about his life for over three hundred years, but they have only met with failures and disappointments. No other author of his eminence and standing in English literature has left so little authentic material about himself as Shakespeare. So much so that a school of critics has gone to the extent of doubting if there was at all a man like Shakespeare. Some critics believe that it was Francis Bacon, the famous prose-writer and politician of the Elizabethan age, who really wrote all the plays under the pseudonym of Shakespeare. Others have tried to identify him with Marlowe and Ben Jonson. But these theories have been finally exploded by the modern critics. Therefore whatever facts about his life are known today are based upon internal and external evidences gathered from his own plays. Dwelling upon this strange phenomenon of Shakespeare's life, Mr. F. S. Boas writes, "The denial of any discoverable relationship between Shakespeare's plays, and his life is unconvincing when pushed to extremes. No writer, be he dramatist or not can cut himself entirely adrift from the general influence of his age, and from his special personal experiences. It is wholly unconceivable that his works should not reveal something of his individuality, or that changes in their general tone should be quite uncoloured by his own vicissitudes of mind and fortune. The broad fact remains that these endeavours to reconstruct the poet's biography from a mixture of external and internal evidence must always be unsatisfactory. The links between the two data are so few and fragmentary that it is impossible to piece them together in a consistent whole." Summarizing briefly the whole of Shakespeare's life Stevens writes jestingly, "Concerning the poet's circumstances, all that we know with any certainty of Shakespeare is that he was born in Stratford-on-Avon, married and had children, that he went to London where he appeared as an actor, and wrote poems and plays ; then he returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried."

Early life at Stratford-on-Avon. No authentic date of Shakespeare's birth can possibly be given. He was, however, baptised on April 26, 1564, at the Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, probably three or four days after his brith. It is, therefore, generally believed that the poet was born on April 22 or 23, 1564. William Shakespeare

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

was the third and eldest surviving child of his parents, John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. John Shakespeare was originally a butcher by profession but later rose to a prosperous businessmen by the help of the property of his wife. At the time of the poet's birth, his father was in very prosperous circumstances and held for one year "the highest office in the Corporation, that of bailiff", and became afterwords the chief alderman of the municipality of Stratford.

William Shakespeare was sent to the Grammer School of Stratford for his early education, where, to borrow a phrase from Ben Jonson, he learnt his "small Latin and less Greek." In a few years, however, the fortunes of his father began to decline and he fell into heavy debt and had to mortgage his wife's property. The boy Shakespeare was, therefore, compelled to leave the school at the age of thirteen to assist his father in his declining business of a butcher.

It was during this period that Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, a farmer's daughter of a neighbouring hamlet. Anne was eight years older than her husband and did not possess any remarkable graces or accomplishments. There are reasons to believe that Shakespeare's married life was not very happy. References to this fact may be discovered at several places in his dramas. Shakespeare writes in the *Twelfth Night*....."Let thy love be younger than itself or thy affection cannot hold the bent". Fed up with economic hardships of a family, Shakespeare left Stratford for London about the year 1586 at the age of eighteen to try his luck in "fresh woods and pastures new."

Shakespeare in London. On reaching London, Shakespeare naturally wandered about helplessly in search of some job. So many legends have come down to us regarding the career with which Shakespeare began his life in London. Some biographers and commentators hold the view that Shakespeare began his career in London as a lawyer's clerk or a surgeon's assistant. Aubrey, the renowned antiquary, authoritatively says, "This William being inclined naturally to poetry and acting came to London, I guess, about 18 ; and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and did act exceedingly well. He began early to make essayes at dramatique poetry, which at that time was very lowe ; and his playes tooke well." But Dr. Johnson relates another malicious story which is nowadays generally discarded. He says, "In the time of Elizabeth coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play and when Shakespeare fled to London from terror of a criminal prosecution (for stealing deer of one Sir Thomas Lacy at Gharlecote), his first expedient was to wait at the door of the play-house and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness that in a short time every man as he alighted called for William Shakespeare and scarcely

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

any other waiter was trusted with a horse, while William Shakespeare could be had." There is yet another legend in vogue on the authority of Malory who observes : There is a stage tradition that his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant, whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage." Amidst these conflicting views one thing seems to be certain that Shakespeare began as an inferior actor in some playhouses in London. By and by he acquired popularity and came to be recognized as an excellent actor. Meanwhile, he started writing and adapting plays in collaboration with other established playwrights, and soon he began to outshine other contemporary playwrights by dint of his excellent poetic powers, glowing imagination and wide sympathies. He began to be envied by such eminent playwrights as Greene, who was second only to Ben Jonson. Greene was so much vexed by the growing popularity and eminence of Shakespeare that he brought out a malicious pamphlet entitled : "A Groat's Worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance." Greene burst out in a fit of wealth and envy ; "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that his Tyger's heart wrapped in player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you."

Gradually, Shakespeare came to be patronized by several eminent persons of England, including Queen Elizabeth and King James I. In 1598 Shakespeare published his first book *Venus and Adonis* and dedicated it to the Earl of Southampton who was so pleased with it that he awarded him several hundred pounds with which Shakespeare got a share in the globe Theatre. Since then Shakespeare's fame and fortune grew by leaps and bounds. Many of his plays were acted before Queen Elizabeth and King James I. His dramatic skill and poetic qualities were unanimously and universally praised all over the counrry. We cannot do better than to quote the words of Francis Meres a contemporary commentator of Shakespeare's : "As the Greek tongue is made famous and eloquent by Homer and the Latin tongue by Virgil and Ovid, so the English tongue it mightily enriched and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments by Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Daniel Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Chapman..... As Plautus and Seneca are the best for comedy among the Latins : so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kind for the stage.....As Epius Stalo said that the Muses would speak with Plautus's tongue if they would speak Latin : so I say the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrase if they would speak English."

Shakespeare back to Stratford. After an absence of some eleven years, Shakespeare returned to Stratford as a man of fortune. In 1597 he purchased the biggest house of the town called the "New Place" for £ 60. He was surrounded by a horde of friends and visitors and had pleasant, happy and luxurious time. His average annual

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

income about the year 1599 was estimated at more than 130 pounds, equal to 1040 at the present time. His health began to fall in the early months of 1616 when he made his will, leaving almost the whole of his property to his eldest daughter, Susannah Hall. He died at the age of fifty-two on April 23, 1616 and was buried inside the chancel of Stratford Church on the 25th with the following epitaph (believed to have been written by Shakespeare himself before his death) inscribed upon his grave ;

"Good Friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
To dig the dust enclosed heare,
Blest be ye man yet spares these stones
And curst be he yet moves my bones."

Tributes paid to Shakespeare by eminent men of letters

There is no recounting the tributes paid to Shakespeare by the most illustrious men of letters, critics and commentators from time to time ever since the Elizabethan Age. Shakespeare has been held as a literary institution in all the countries of the world and praised in the most eloquent words ever spoken by man. No other poet has received such universal recognition and fame as Shakespeare "the giant of Parnassus' hill, the pride, the monarch of mankind." We cannot do better than record some of the remarks made by eminent critics on the various phases and excellences of his poetic talents and dramatic craftmanship.

(1)

"Soul of the age !
The applause ! delight ! wonder of our stage !
How far thou didst our Lily outshine,
Or sporting Kid or Marlowe's mighty line.
He was not of an age, but for all time
Nature herself was proud of his designs
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit
As, since, he will vouchsafe no other wit." —*Ben Jonson*

(2)

"And such was Shakespeare whose strong soul could climb
Steeps of sheer terror, sound the ocean grand
Of passions deep, or over Fancy's strand
Trip with his fairies, keeping step and time ;
His too the power to laugh out full and clear
With unembittered joyance, and to move
As tenderly as Dante, whose austere,
Stern spirit through the worlds below, above
Unsmiling—strode to tell the tidings here." —*W.W. Story*

(3)

"What needs my Shakespeare, for his honour'd Bones
The labour of an age in piled Stones ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a star-pointing Pyramid ?
Dear son of memory, great heir of Fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name ?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a live-long monument
And so sepulcher'd in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a Tomb would wish to die."

—*John Milton*

(4)

"Others abide our question ; Thou art free.
We ask and ask : Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base,
To the foil'd searching of mortality." —*Matthew Arnold*

(5)

"He knew the thrills and ecstasies of Love,
The savage joys of Hatred and Revenge :
He heard the hiss of Envy's snakes ;
He watched the eagles of Ambition soar ;
There was no hope that did not put its star
Above his head, no Fear he had not felt
Go joy that had not shed its sunshine on his face."

—*H.G. Ingersoll*

(6)

"Shakespeare ! to such name's sounding, what succeeds
Fitly as a silence ? Farther forth the spell—
Act follows word the speaker knows full well,
Not tempers with its magic more than needs"

—*Robert Browning*

(7)

"Not if men's tongues and angels' all in one
Spake, might the word be said that might speak thee.
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields, mountains, yea the sea,
What power is in them all to praise the sun ?
His praise is this—he can be praised of none."

—*A.C. Swinburne*

(8)

"The greatest genius that perhaps human nature has yet produced, our myriad-minded Shakespeare." —*Coleridge*

(9)

"He was the man, who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and the most comprehensive soul." —*Dryden*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

(10)

"Shakespeare was "the grandest thing we have yet done..... Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day, but this Shakespeare does not go, he lasts for ever with us, We cannot give up our Shakespeare." —*Carlyle*

(11)

"No other author has even so copious, so bold, so creative an imagination, with so perfect a knowledge of the passions, humours and sentiments of mankind. He painted all characters from kings down to peasants, with equal truth and equal force. If human nature were destroyed and no monuments were left of it except his works, other beings might know what man was from those writings."

—*George Lyttleton*

(12)

"In points of artistic resource and technical ability such as copious and expressive diction, freshness and pregnancy of verbal combination, richly modulated verse, and structural skill in the handling of incident and action, Shakespeare's supremacy is indeed sufficiently assured. But after all, it is, of course, in the spirit and substance of his work, his power of piercing to the hidden centres of character, of touching the deepest springs of impulse and passion out of which are the issues of life, and of evolving those issues dramatically with a flawless strength, subtlety and truth, which raises him so immensely above and beyond not only the best of the playwrights who went before him, but the whole line of illustrious dramatists that came after him. It is Shakespeare's unique distinction that he has an absolute command all over the complexities of thought and feeling that prompt to action and bring out the dividing lines of character. He sweeps with the hand of a master the whole gamut of human experience, from the lowest note to the very top of its compass, from the sportive childish trebel of Mamilius and the pleading boyish tones of Prince Arthur, as to the sceptre-hunted terrors of Macbeth, the tropical passion of Othello, the agonised sense and tortured spirit of Hamlet, the sustained elemental grandeur, the Titanic force, the utterly tragical pathos of King Lear." —*T.S.*

5

Shakespeare's Literary Career

Shakespeare's literary career is conventionally divided into four periods. Dowden, in his classic book *The Growth of Shakespeare's Mind and Art*, classifies his literary career extended over a period of twenty-four years (1588—1612) into the following four periods :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

(i) The First Period, 1588—94 (In the Workshop) : This was Shakespeare's first period of apprenticeship. He was just learning the art of writing and stage-craft. All the plays written by him during this period bear the mark of his immature talents and art. These early plays are marked by highly fanciful doggerel verse, frequency of word-play, excessive use of conceit and bombast, unbridled fancy and exuberance and long soliloquies and asides. All the plays of this period are marked by the presence of vivacity, cleverness, delight in the beauty and quick enjoyment of existence. This style is often crude and artificial, the power of characterisation is still rudimentary ; the wit is sparkling and vivacious rather than subtle and refined ; the pathos of life is recognised but not the terror or its mystery." To this period belong : *Love's Labour's Lost* (*1591*), *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (*1592*), *Richard III* (*1593*) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*1593*), *Romeo and Juliet* (*1593*) and *The Comedy of Errors* (*1599*).

(ii) The Second Period, 1594—1600 (In the World) : Shakespeare's talents gradually ripend and his understanding of human life and the world matured. Now he unconsciously crept into the second phase of his literary life. He could now realize the eternity in a moment and the universe in the palm of his hand. As Dowden says, "Instead of imperfect sketches, we have full-length portraits, showing a grasp of life and of character in deeper and more complex aspects than before. The splendid panorama of national history is unrolled before our eyes, and its moral issues are exhibited in a clear and comprehensive working." Throughout the historical plays there is the plea for national unity ; throughout is the exultation of national strength pride of England, love of its green fields and its seabound shores, rejoicing in its conquests, faith in its power and hope for its future. The art of characterization exhibits Shakespeare's mature understanding of the various and varied complicated phases of human life and psychology. The poet also possessed the key with which he could unlock the woman's heart. He began with Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* and passing through Helena, Ophelia, Isabella, Rosalind and Celia, he attained to the height of Desdemona and Cordelia in the following phase of his maturity. He won over the metrical flaws, artistic weaknesses and uncurbed fantasy of the first period. His plots are now more compact and versification flawless. To this period belong :

Richard II (*1594*), *King John* (*1595*), *The Merchant of Venice* (*1596*). *Henry IV* (*1597*), *Much Ado About Nothing* (*1597*), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (*1598*), *As You Like It* (*1599*) and *Twelfth Night* (*1600—1601*).

(iii) The Third Period, 1600—1608 (Out of the Depths). The climax of Shakespeare's dramatic skill and grandeur is reached in this period of great tragedies. This period is described as a period of intense gloom and tragic effect. His great tragedies deal with the far deeper problems of life and fate, evil and good and errors and corrections. They exhibit the eternal conflict between the good and

CC-0. Panjab Digital Library Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

evil, a conflict in which good suffers tremendously, though not without due punishment being inflicted upon the evil in the end. Mortality of human life, frailty of human dreams and vanity of human wishes form the subject-matter of the great Shakespearean tragedies of this period. The poet "begins to handle the problems of the deeper spiritual life and to face the tragic riddles of human sin and agony". He "sounds with his imagination the depths of the human heart ; he enquires into the saddest parts of human life and studies the great mystery of evil." In the words of Gervinus, "The unnatural dissolving of natural bonds, oppression, falsehood, treachery, and ingratitude towards the benefactors, friends and relatives, towards those to whom the most sacred duties should be dedicated, this is the new tragical conception, which now most powerfully and profoundly occupies the poet in the various works of this epoch of his life." Macbeth's treason against Duncan, Regan and Goneril's ingratitude towards their father Lear, Othello's suspicion about the chastity of his wife Desdemona and Hamlet's insanity resulting from the ingratitude of his mother towards her husband, are simply appalling. To this period belong :

Julius Caesar (*1601*), *Hamlet* (*1602*), *Othello* (*1604*), *King Lear* (*1605*), *Macbeth* (*1606*), *Antony and Cleopatra* (*1607*) *and Coriolanus* (*1608*).

(iv) **The Fourth Period, 1608—12 (On the Heights)**. With the decline of Shakespeare's youthful vigour and energy, the consummate tragic intensity also weakened and the hard shadows melted away. There are to be no more Othellos, no more Macbeths or Iagos ; passions, cynicism and fierce judgment fade away into a charitable sunset and peaceful light of mercy, forgiveness, repentance, reunion and reconciliation :

> "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Let's in new light through chinks that time had made."

And the light is not earthly. There is a halo of mellow romantic light pervading all Shakespeare's last plays. Everyone of his last plays ends happily. All alike work upon cruel passions and end in general reconciliation. Repentance, reconciliation and forgiveness—these are the watchwords of the last plays of Shakespeare :

> The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance.

Quiller-Couch says, "We must honour Shakespeare the more because of the height of his skill seeking to present a noble thing in life, which the rules of his craft seemed to disallow ; he turned his back on the past success, defied the technical bars and risked a made reputation—nay cast it aside as one might cast aside an old cloak—to follow nature". Having attained this stage, Shakespeare abandoned literary workmanship after 1612, as promised by him in *The Tempest* :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I will break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

6

Classification of Shakespeare's Plays

Repeated efforts have been made by eminent critics of Shakespeare from time to time to classify his plays satisfactorily. But complete and final success has not yet been achieved. In his lectures on the 'Order of Shakespeare's Play' Coleridge remarked, "Various attempts have been made to arrange the plays of Shakespeare, each according to its priority in time, by proofs derived from external documents. How unsuccessful these have been might easily be shown, not only from the widely different results arrived at by men all deeply versed in the black letter books, old plays, pamphlets, manuscript records and catalogues of that age, but also from the fallacious and unsatisfactory nature of the facts and assumptions on which the evidence rests."

Prof. Dowden classifies Shakespeare's plays as follows :

(i) Pre-Shakespearean Group, touched by Shakespeare
Titus Andronicus : 1589–90
Henry VI, Part I : 1590–91

(ii) Early Comedy
Love's Labour's Lost : 1590
Comedy of Errors : 1591
Two Gentlemen of Verona : 1592–93
A Midsummer Night's Dream : 1593–94

(iii) Marlowe—Shakespearean Group—Early Historical Plays
Henry VI, Parts II & III : 1591–92
Richard III : 1593

(iv) Early Tragedy
Romeo and Juliet : 1591

(v) Middle Historical Plays
Richard II : 1594
King John : 1595

(vi) Middle Comedy
The Merchant of Venice : 1594

(vii) Later Historical Plays and Comedies united
Henry IV, Parts I and II : 1597–98
Henry V : 1599

(viii) Later Comedy
A. Rough and Boisterous
Taming of the Shrew : 1597
Merry Wives of Windsor : 1598

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

B. Joyous, Refined, Romantic

Much Ado About Nothing : 1598
As You Like It : 1599
Twelfth Night : 1600–1

C. Serious, dark, ironical

All's Well That Ends Well : 1601–2
Measure for Measure : 1603
Troilus and Cressida : 1603, revised 1607

(ix) Middle Tragedy

Julius Caesar : 1602
Hamlet : 1602

(x) Later Tragedy

Othello : 1604
King Lear : 1605
Macbeth : 1606
Antony and Cleopatra : 1607
Coriolanus : 1608
Timon of Athens : 1607–8

(xi) Romances

Pericles : 1608
Cymbeline : 1609
The Tempest : 1610
The Winter's Tale : 1610–11

Classification of Shakespeare's Plays in the Folio of 1639

HISTORIES

1. Henry VI
2. Antony and Cleopatra
3. Richard III
4. Richard II
5. King John
6. Henry IV
7. Henry V
8. Henry VIII

TRAGEDIES

Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet
Julius Caesar
Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Cymbeline
Timon of Athens

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

COMEDIES

Love's Labour's Lost
The Comedy of Errors
Two Gentlemen of Verona
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Taming of the Shrew
Merry Wives of Windsor
Much Ado About Nothing
As You Like It
Twelfth Night
All's Well That Ends Well
Measure for Measure
Troilus and Cressida
The Winter's Tale.

7

The Sequence of Shakespeare's Plays

"Obviously, if the reader wishes to observe the development of Shakespeare's style and the growth of his powers as an artist, the most satisfactory order in which to read his plays would be that in which they were composed. Yet important as the matter is the arrangement of Shakespeare's work in chronological order is one of the most difficult of scholarly problems. In many cases it is quite impossible to determine the order of succession, many of the dates usually assigned to plays are conjectural and those who know most about Shakespeare are the least willing to suggest a definite order or be dogmatic concerning the exact year in which an individual play was written. In the case of a modern author, information to answer questions of this kind is readily accessible : in Shakespeare's case it is almost wholly lacking. The traditional order of the First Folio, which classifies the plays as Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies and places *The Tempest* first and *Cymbeline* last, is still adhered to in many modern editions, but scholars universally reject this arrangement as having no chronological basis. The character of the evidence upon which they attempt a rearrangement will be clear from a few examples. The sources of information are six in number."

(A) Records of Performance

These are few in number and usually furnish a date before which a play was composed, without any information as to how long before. Thus, as account of the revels of the law students at Gray's Inn on December 28, 1594, mentions a performance of *The Comedy of Errors* ; one John Manningham, a student at the Middle Temple, in his diary mentions seeing *Twelfth Night* there on February 2, 1602 ; a foreign visitor to London. Thomas Platters records in his diary seeing *Julius Caesar* on September 21, 1599 : the first

CC-0. Panjab University Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598) mentions a performance at court the previous Christmas; and an account of the burning of the Globe Theatre June 29, 1613, refers to *Henry VIII* as a new play.

(B) Literary Allusions

Of these the most important is Francis Mere's praise of Shakespeare in *Polladis Tamia* (1598) and his specific mention of twelve plays then written : *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Love's Lobaur's Won* (unidentified), *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Richard II, Richard III, Henry IV, King John, Titus Andronicus, and Romeo and Juliet*. There is also an allusion to Talbot, a character in *Henry IV, in* Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Pennilesse* (1502) ; and a note about *Hamlet* made by Gabriel Harvey sometimes between 1598 and 1601. Like the notices of performances these allusions are usually indefinite and furnish only a terminal date.

(C) References in the Plays to Datable Historical Events

Shakespeare, again, is sparing in 'topical allusions', and passages thought to refer to current events or controversies require caution on the part of the interpreter. Yet, the Chorus before the fifth act of *Henry V* contains a clear allusion to the compaign of the Earl of Essex in Ireland, and fixes the date of performance at which the prologue was used between March 27 and September 28, 1599. There are also allusions in *Hamlet* to the revival of the boy actors (1599) : *Macbeth* to the house of Stuarts and perhaps, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to the baptism ceremonies of Prince Henry of Scotland (1594).

(D) Links Between Plays themselves

The most marked of these is the continuity of *Richard II* and *Henry IV*, and the author's promise at the end of the latter play of continuing the story in *Henry V*, which establishes the chronological sequence of these four plays. The pointed allusion of Robin Goodfellow in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that this time "naught shall go ill, Jack shall have Jill", likewise, seems to be a link with *Love's Labour's Lost*, which "doth not end like and old play, Jack hath not Jill". If so, it establishes the order of composition, though not a definite date.

(E) Dates of Publication

Dates of title pages or dates of registration in the book of the Sationers' Company are less valuable than might at first be supposed, because in Shakespeare's time plays were almost never written for publication, and those which 'escaped into point' usually did so after their popularity on the stage had declined. Yet, for several of Shakespeare' plays no other reliable information exists, among them *Richard III* (1597) *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *Richard II* (1597), *Henry IV* (1598), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600) and *The*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Merry Wives of Windsor (1602) *Antony and Cleopatra* was entered for publication in 1608 add *As You Like It* in 1600, though neither appeared in print before 1623 : *Troilus and Cressida* was registered in 1603, though no edition earlier than 1609 is known. The date of licensing or of publication, therefore, at least gives a terminal date and is sometimes a valuable clue.

(F) Variations of Style and Versification

This is the least reliable type of evidence, and great caution must be exercised in drawing inferences from it. The assumption is that as Shakespeare grew in experience, his style of writing reflected his intellectual development, his character study deepened, his taste improved, and his technique became more and more individual. Especially signaled out have been the variations of Shakespeare's blank verse and growth from a stereotyped to a flexible medium. Certain broad features of Shakespeare's development as an artist are of course recognizable, but obviously also, a detailed literary and psychological analysis is possible only after the proper order of the plays has been established, and not before. Subject-matter and mood, too, determine to a large extent the style of writing, and allowance must also be made for experiment or for passing influences. Yet, taken as a whole, this 'internal evidence', when tactfully and objectively used, is valuable, if only as a check upon other evidence. In the case of some plays, notably *The Taming of the Shrew, All's Well That Ends Well, Coriolanus, Cymbeline*, and *Timon of Athens* little or no other evidence exists as to the date of composition.

If, therefore, the absolute chronology of Shakespeare's plays is far from certain, scholars have found it necessary to establish at least a working order.

8

Shakespeare's English

Shakespeare's English means Elizabethan English and there is a great difference between Elizabethan English and modern English, there is also a difference between spoken English and written English. The three general features of Elizabethan English are brevity, emphasis and tendency to interchange parts of speech. Further, there is a difference in vocabulary and also in grammar between Shakespeare's English and modern English. In Shakespeare's plays, we find many words are changed in meaning, many archaic words used, many obsolete words also used, and some of the words are pronounced also in a different manner than at the present time. Words such as advised, continent, danger, discover, expect, fond virtue, shrewd, prevent, presently, etc. are used in a different sense. There are many archaic words such as afread, fill-force, happened. sonties, trancet, usance, etc., which can be found in the plays. There are certain words in Shakespeare's plays such as imposition, contemplation, occasion, distinct, etc., which are pronounced in a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

different manner now from the Elizabethan days. With regard to grammatical difference between Shakespeare's English and modern English, Deighton says :

The difference between the grammar of Shakespeare's writings and of the English of the present day are mainly due to the following facts :

1. The process by which English has changed from a highly inflected language to one with but few inflections, though far advanced in Shakespeare's time, had not gone quite so far as at present. Hence, some usages which judged by the grammatical standards of the present-day English may appear to be erroneous, are to be explained by early grammatical inflections and usages, and are, therefore, old-fashioned rather than incorrect.

2. Grammatical rules had not been fixed with their present rigidity, indeed the first English grammar was written by Shakespeare's contemporary, Ben Jonson. Constructions now considered ungrammatical were at that time perfectly allowable, and were used by all the best writers, *e. g.*, the use of the double superlative and of the double comparative.

3. The plays of Shakespeare represent spoken language, in which ellipses and abrupt transitions are frequent. Some of apparently loose grammatical constructions in Shakespeare may possibly be due to the desire to express more vividly the ellipses and changes of construction which occur in actual speech.

Striking features of Shakespearean grammar are (1) the frequent use of ellipses, (2) the frequent use of emphatic constructions, (3) the use of compound words, (4) the frequent interchange of part of speech.

Deighton makes certain general remarks about Shakespeare's English :

"In the words of Shakespeare, the English language rises to its highest power and widest compass. Other writers have a recognisable and individual style, but the completeness of Shakespeare's mastery over the resources of the English language made him a master of all styles, so that in his mother-tongue he was capable of expressing the whole range of feeling and of portraying the most divergent types of character. A part of Shakespeare's mastery of the English language lay in the wide range of his vocabulary. In his works he uses over twenty thousand different words, a vocabulary very much more extensive than that of any other writer.

The works of Shakespeare fall within the earlier part of that period of the development of the English language generally known as Modern English (from about 1500 to the present time). At his time, though the language had in the main taken on its present grammatical forms and vocabulary, there were nevertheless important differences in both these respects from the English of today. The early period of Modern English is the period of experiment and comparative licence both in the importation of new words and in

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the formation of idioms and grammatical constructions. During this period, a great change in vowel sounds, and consequently, in pronunciation took place ; but as there was no corresponding change in spelling, these vowel-changes in the distribution of accents and in the division of works in syllables."

The English language was in fluid in the time of Shakespeare. Shakespeare enjoyed a freedom of invention unknown to his succesors. Walter Raleigh says : "He coins words lavishly, and assigns new meanings to old forms. He knows nothing of the so-called parts of speech : where he lacks a verb he will make it from the first noun or adjective that comes to hand. The more or less precise significations which are now attached to certain Latin prefixes and suffixes are all disordered and mixed in his use of them. He violates almost every grammatical rule, and in accordance with what is, after all, the best English usage, neglects formal concord in the interests of a vaguer truth of impression. The number and persons of a verb, in his English, are regulated by the meaning of the subject, not by its grammatical forms. His language is often too far-fetched, and owes to much to books to be called colloquial ; but the syntax and framework of his sentences have all the freedom of the most impulsive speech." Shakespeare cannot, therefore, be a safe model for a new writer.

9

Shakespeare's Use of Rhyme in his Plays

The rhymed couplet is very frequently used by Shakespeare in his plays, but the amount of rhyme slowly decreases in his later plays. The proportion of rhymed couplet in a play is, therefore, a positive sign of the period to which the play belongs. While determining the date of composition of a play one can put a question to himself :

"Is there much rhyme ? the play is early.
Is there little rhyme ? the play is late."

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, which is supposed to be one of the earliest plays of Shakespeare, there are about two rhymed lines to everyone of black verse. In *The Comedy of Errors* there are 380 rhymed lines to 1150 unrhymed lines. In *The Tempest*, which is one of the latest plays of Shakespeare, there are only two rhymed lines. whereas in *The Writer's Tale* there is no rhymed line. But while applying this rhyme test, we should exclude the masques and songs in the plays.

But let us consider why Shakespeare adopted blank verse and gradually abandoned rhyme. So far as blank verse is concerned, it has the advantages of naturalness, freedom and variety over rhyme. Rhyme destroys the illusion of reality, particularly in moments of great emotion. Rhyme is artificial ; and it constantly reminds us that a play is a fiction and not a reality. In real life, nobody speaks in rhyme. Blank verse, on the other hand, creates the illusion of

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

reality and produces naturalness. Then again, rhyme puts a restraint upon the writer ; he is compelled sometimes to invert the order of words and even to use a less suitable word. The rhythm of the rhymed couplets confines the sense within the limits of the couplet, while blank verse allows the sense to run on with the lines. In the blank verse, the sense finds free expression while in rhymed lines the verse dominates the sense. That is why blank verse has not only naturalness but also freedom about it. Last of all, blank verse gives variety and change but rhyme produces monotony, because in rhymed lines there is a pause either at the end of the first line or invariably at the second line. There is no uniformity in blank verse as there is in rhymed lines, and consequently, rhymed lines become monotonous faster than verse. Although in a long narrative poem or in a short lyric, the rhyme, when recited, may be quite pleasing to the ear yet the sound of rhyme, in a long piece of conversation becomes monotonous.

In Shakespeare's later plays, we find rhyme only at the end of a scene or at the close of a long speech. With regard to the use of rhyme at the end of a scene, Dr. Abbott remarks, "Rhyme was often used as an effective termination at the end of the scene. When the scenery was not charged, or the arrangements were so defective that the change was not easily perceptible, it was perhaps additionally desirable to mark that a scene was finished."

In Shakespeare's plays rhyme often marks the close of a scene, and sometimes marks leave-taking or the close of a chapter in a man's life suggesting farewell. For example, in *As You Like It*, we find Adam and Orlando using rhyme while bidding farewell to their former life. In *Richard II* also the favourities of the king express their feelings in rhyme meaning to say that their period of prosperity is over. In the same play, rhyme is used also to emphasise the tragedy of the close of Richard's life. In *King Lear*, the banished Kent is made to use rhyme for his leave-taking. Sometimes, even in his very late plays like *Othello* and *King Lear* Shakespeare uses rhyme as the expression of moral reflections upon life. Rhyme is surely far more impressive than blank verse or prose in proverbs and maxims and in other moral reflections.

10

Shakespeare's Use of Prose in his Plays

A. W. Verity remarks about the use of prose in Shakespeare's plays ; "The chief use to which Shakespeare puts prose is a conversational medium of expression. He introduces it where he wishes to lower the drammatic pitch, and does not desire a poetical effect, where in fact, he wants to convey the impression of people talking together. This use is illustrated so fully in *The Merchant of Venice* that it is needless to particularise. Attention however, may be drawn to the interesting transitions from prose to verse and verse to prose in the same scene. These alterations are very suggestive as

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

indications of mood or circumstances, and the reason in each should be carefully considered. Note, for instance, in I, iii, how the heightening of the dramatic interest at Antonio's entrance is marked by the change from prose to verse. It should be observed too, how characters conceived wholly in a tragic or poetic spirit (Antonio Bassanio, speak entirely or almost entirely in verse. Bitterness and contempt, irony and wit, abruptness of thought or feeling, all find vent more naturally and pointedly in prose than verse."

Shakespeare uses prose for comic parts. For example, Touchstone in *As You Like It* always uses prose. During the middle period of Shakespeare's dramatic career we find mostly prose in the comedies. For example, *Much Ado About Nothing* is known as a prose comedy. Shakespeare uses prose particularly as the language of the characters of humble position in his plays such as servants, sailors, soldiers etc. Prose forms the medium of expression particularly in scenes of low life when it is also comic in tone and texture. as we find prose being used in the grave-digging scene in *Hamlet*, while in *The Tempest*, Stephano and Trinculo always speak in prose but Caliban invariably speaks in verse. In *Henry V*, the Hostess. Bardolph, Nym, and the Boy speak in prose because they are of humble status and also humorous. The conversation between Launcelot and his father in the present play is in prose but Bassanio answers them in verse.

Shakespeare uses prose in letters, proclamations, document etc. and sometimes for the expression of extreme emotion and mental derangement. For expample, Ophelia and Hamlat in *Hamlet*, and Edgar in *King Lear* are made to speak in prose when they are either in extreme fits of emotion or in real or feigned fits of insanity. When Shylock speaks in the bitterest tone with the strongest emotion's he speaks in prose. A. W. Verity again remarks that Shakespeare's use of prose increases as the character of his plays grows more varied and complex. *Richard II*, written five or six years before *Henry V*, has no prose, not even in III, IV with the Gardeners, which is of the same genere as the Grave-digging scene. The amount of prose in a play, therefore, is an indication of its date, like the amount of rhyme, though not so conclusive an indication.

11

Shakespeare as a Dramatist and a Poet

Shakespeare is both a poet and a dramatist. It is irrelevant to question whether he is greater as a dramatist or as a poet because the very woof and web of his dramas is made of the poetic stuff ; and that is why we should not judge him comparatively as a poet and a dramatist. All that we should say is that he is both a poet and a dramatist and equally great as both. Or should we say that he is a poetic dramatist or a dramatic poet ? No. We can better say that he is poetic dramatist but a dramatic poet, because a dramatic poet means one who writes his dramas in verse and not

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

in prose at all or one who has some elements of the drama in his poetry. So far as Shakespeare's sonnets and other poems are concerned, there is no question of any dramatic element about any of them.

Of course, Shakespeare has written many sonnets and has also introduced many lyrics into his dramas, and they can compare most favourably with the best poetry in the world. Some of the critics have said that Shakespeare was most imaginative, and therefore, he was most poetic. Without being imaginative nobody can be a good artist, whether as a poet or a dramatist or even as a novelist or a story-writer. Shakespeare surely possessed the greatest wealth of imagination, and that is why he is regarded as one of the greatest poets in the world; and that is why, also, his dramas read like so many glorious visions of human passions, emotions, and fancies. But to say that Shakespeare's dramas are based entirely upon imagination, and not at all upon reason or the solid facts of life, would be wrong or rather doing injustice to his great genius. Shakespeare undoubtedly held the mirror upto nature but that does not mean that he was moving constantly in a world of dreams. The world of nature means the world of facts, incidents, circumstances and whatever happens in human life or whatever is associated with human nature.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare says,

> "The poet's eye in fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from Heaven to earth, from earth to Heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothings
> A local habitation and a name."

All this Shakespeare says about the qualities of a poet because he is himself a poet but that does not mean that whatever he has composed in the form of dramas is all airy nothing without any local habitation and a name, as some of the critics of Shakespeare have interpreted Shakespeare's dramatic or poetic genius. These critics have tried to distinguish between Shakespeare and other English dramatists such as Bernard Shaw and Galsworthy by saying that Shakespeare's dramas are based upon imagination while those of Shaw and Galsworthy are based upon reason. This is absolutely wrong. It is also equally wrong when these scholars say that Shakespeare's aim was only to entertain and not to instruct his readers or audience, while the aim of Galsworthy and Shaw was only to instruct the reader or the audience. These scholars are mistaken in thinking that Shakespeare deals with no problem or incident or event of life whereas Galsworthy and Shaw deal with the problems of contemporary life. Of course, Shakespeare might not have bothered so much about contemporary life but he has surely dealt with past life as well as with life itself of all times and for all climes. Does he not deal with the life and career of Julius Caesar, or that of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Richard II, or that of the Prince or the King of Denmark or that of King Henry IV or V ? Does he not reflect human life and nature more powerfully, more truly, more effectively in his plays than Galsworthy or Shaw ? Shakespeare may have introduced more of the imaginative element into his plays than any of the modern dramatists, simply because he was both a poet and a dramatist, which unfortunately, neither Galsworthy nor Shaw was.

Poetry is undoubtedly the soul of Shakespeare's dramas, not because he has introduced many verses into them but because his very conception of life was poetic and also because he turned into poetry everything he touched. We find such immortal touches of poetry practically in all his dramas chiefly because he was a poet and not merely a dramatist like Shaw or Galsworthy.

12

Shakespeare's Indebtedness to Other Dramatists and Poets

Shakespeare never fought shy of acknowledging his indebtedness to his predecessors in the dramatic or in the poetic field whether they belonged to Elizabethan England or to ancient Greece or Rome or to Mediaeval Germany or France. His indebtedness can be considered from different points of view, namely, sources of his plays ; his blank verse ; his prose ; his songs and lyrics : the element of the supernatural and also the element of horror, bloodshed, fury of passion etc. and last of all his plot-construction and characterisation.

So far as the stories of his plays are concerned, he borrowed the material from all sources that were conveniently available because he never wanted to waste his energy in inventing plots or stories. So far as his wit and humour, his entertaining and sprightly prose and also his world of the fairies and spirits are concerned, he was greatly indebted to his predecessor John Lyly, an English writer, who was well-known for his wit and fancy, for his storehouse of folklore and mythology. The fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are all borrowed from Lyly's storehouse, and all the wit and humour in *Twelfth Night, As You Like It* and other comedies are equally drawn from John Lyly without any reservation. Even for the prose dialogues, and some of the plot constructions of his plays Shakespeare was indebted to John Lyly who was a master prose-writer of wit and humour and also of aphorisms or short and pithy expressions.

For his blank verse, Shakespeare was indebted to no other writer than his immediate predecessor, Christopher Marlowe and also partly to Peele, who was the first to use verse in plays. Marlowe made blank verse a mighty and musical thing which became majestic and sublime in the hands of Shakespeare. Shakespeare openly mentions Lyly and Marlowe in his plays and acknowledges his greatfulness to them for his apprenticeship. Marlowe taught Shakespeare the great art of dramatic expression of human passion and imagination which we find in abundance, particularly in the tragedies.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

But Shakespeare's tragic cast comes from both Marlowe and Thomas Kyd ; particularly, his tragic horror, sensational revenge, bloodshed, and even the supernatural element in some of his tragedies such as the ghosts are borrowed from Thomas Kyd. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as has been already pointed out. is based upon Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. The sound and fury of Kyd which signifies nothing is coverted by Shakespeare into something which is at once meaningful and fraught with some elements of tragic majesty and horror, which neither Marlowe nor Thomas Kyd could lend to their own plays. Shakespeare avoided the cruel revenge and bloodshed which were used by Kyd and Marlowe in their plays.

Shakespeare might have borrowed partly his dtamatic art and even dramatic expression from many of his predecessors both native and foreign ; yet it must be said, in justice to him, that he used his material in his own original manner which has lent to all his plays the stamp of uniqueness which has no parallel in dramatic literature. Shakespeare has shown his real genius, not in building up the plots but in the art of characterisation, which neither Marlowe nor any other dramatist has been able to achieve. Shakespeare, by means of his imagination as well as his psychological insight, has been able to build up human characters as fresh, living, and true to life as they are also varied, typical and unique of the living things of Nature. He was undoubtedly influenced by the great ancient dramatists of Rome and Greece ; but then, he was never a blind follower of their technique. For example, he never follows the hard and fast rules of Seneca or Plautus or of Euripides either in the *Unities* or in the *Prologue* or the *Epilogue* except in a very few cases. He was not an orthodox writer or thinker, and therefore, like nature, he allowed his art to have its full freedom to develop itself under the laws of Nature and not of human laws prescribed for either poetry or drama.

Instead of the *Prologue*, Shakespeare strikes the key-note of his plays in the very first Scene of the first Act : and instead of the *Epilogue* he winds up his plays by making some of his characters, who remain upon the stage till the last moment, speak a few words which serve as the Epilogue. Shakespeare has avoided the observance of the *Unities* because he has found them impracticable and inconvenient for the development of the plots of his plays. He has also avoided the Greek theory of *Nemesis* because he realised that it is a wrong theory. He found out in actual life that what we call an offence or what we declare as virtue or vice may not be anything in the eyes of Nature, and therefore, to punish an offender or reward a virtuous person would be wrong dispensation of justice. Hence, he followed the laws of Nature even in his plays. What he has done is simply to implant in the hero some great flaw or defect of character due to which he commits several errors of judgment and action and naturally brings about misfortunes and calamities upon himself as well as upon others. This flaw in his hero is not his own invention but it is inborn because most men and women are born with certain

CC-0. Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

defects of character due to which they suffer in life and make others also suffer.

Represented idea of his life in his tragedies

Shakespeare's Conception of Tragedy

The truth is that Shakespeare never bothered himself with any theory of Tragedy, nor did he invent a tragic conception for himself. He got the clue of high tragic conception from eminent classical scholars like Aristotle, to which he added his own grandeur and lustre. He expressed his idea of life in his tragedies, represented its terror and mystery as he observed and centemplated upon them. Yet in spite of his universality and variety, he employed much the same effects in different plays to serve the same or similar ends. It is on the correctness of our analysis of these effects that the truth of our final examination of Shakespeare's conception of tragedy will ultimately rest. We cannot do better than to follow the lines suggested by Prof. Bradley who has exhaustively dealt with this subject.

The first main point common to all Shakespeare's tragedies is that the themes of all his tragedies are essentially stirring and often melodramatic. The ghost, the madness or semi-madness of Ophelia, Hamlet and Lear; the grave yard scene in *Hamlet*; the witches, ghosts, apparitions and numerous murders in *Macbeth*; the drunken scenes and riots in *Othello*, the blinding of Gloucester—these are all sensational and melodramatic scenes common to all his great tragedies. Obviously, Shakespeare's primary thought was dramatic effectiveness, for which he introduced a rich series of excitement to cater for the low taste of common Elizabethan spectators. Considered from this point of view his great tragedies are nothing but successfully written melodramas, calculated to appeal to tastes not overrefined and not always overcivilized. This is, however, only the outward framework. Beyond and within the external sensationalism Shakespeare has placed a more subtle, a more poetical, a more overpowering and awe-inspiring, yet less tangible tragic spirit.

Entering into the inner spirit of the Shakespearean tragedy, we find that they present conflict between good and evil. Shakespeare seems to believe that evil does exist—evil that is in perpetual conflict with good. This conflict between good and evil involves sacrifice of the good and also punishment to the evil. It brings us into the very root of things that confront us with the deepest mystery of life. Having exalted our deepest emotions so far, Shakespearean tragedy offers no final solution and leaves us in a solemn atmosphere of awe and grandeur. Dwelling upon this element of Shakespearean tragedy Dowden says, "Tragedy as conceived by Shakespeare is concerned with the ruin or restoration of the soul and the life of man. In other words, its subject is the struggle of good and evil in the world. He does not, like Dante, pursue the soul of man through circles of unending fortune or sphere made radiant by the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

eternal presence of God. No great deliverer of mankind descends from the Heavens. Here, upon the earth, evil is—such was Shakespeare's declaration in the most emphatic accent. Iago actually exists. There is also in the earth a sacred passion of deliverance, a pure redeeming ardour. Cordelia exists. That Shakespeare can tell for certain. But how Iago can be, and why Cordelia lies strangled across the breast of Lear—Shakespeare declines all answers to such questions. He prefers to let you remain in the solemn presence of a mystery." While we feel Shakespeare's deep sympathy for the nobility and grandeur of life, we can hardly say that in his view the gods are on the side of good :

> As flies to wanton boys,
> Are we to gods,
> They kill us for their sport.

So remarks Shakespeare in *King Lear*. Desdemona dies inspite of her spotless chastity : Cordelia is murdered inspite of her unwavering filial devotion and kindness ; Duncan is killed inspite of his humility and serenity and Hamlet himself dies in the end inspite of all his noble qualities of head and heart. It appears as if there is no justice in the Divine Court of Justice and that God is not in Heaven and all's not right with the world. Yet we are not left crushed or pessimistic ; for we are in the presence of eternal mystry which by its very nature is insoluble.

Each play is, then, a symphony on some definite abstract theme. We may call *Othello*, a drama of deception and of self-deception ; *Macbeth*, a drama of ambition ; *Lear*, a drama of headstrong passion and false pride ; *Hamlet*, a drama of indecision ; *Corlolanus*, a drama of social pride ; and *Antony and Cleopatra*, a drama of unlawful love. This abstract notion of human life is given a tangible and concrete shape in the Shakespearean tragedy. Shakespeare follows the example of the great Greek tragic dramatists in this point. Fatal flaw in their own characters.

Though the Shakespearean tragedy brings before us a considerable number of persons, it is predominantly a story of one person, the hero, or at the most of two—the hero and the heroine. Shakespeare's heroes, one and all, are, as a rule, men of high nobility and eminence, ending in destruction caused by a failing, a fatal flaw, in their own characters. Lear was a noble king, Macbeth a great general, Othello an unchallenged warrior and Hamlet a noble prince. 'The tragic hero', says Aristotle, "should be someone of high fame and flourishing prosperity." Prof. Nicoll observes, "The presence of a person of prominence as a hero gives the sense that more is involved than is apparent on the surface." With the fate of a king or emperor is attached the fate of the millions and therefore his fall implies the fall of a whole nation. This gives a vivid impression of universality of appeal to a Shakespearean tragedy. Prof. Bradley remarks, "His fate affects the welfare of a whole nation or empire, and when he falls suddenly from the height of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

earthly greatness to the dust his fall produces a sense of contrast, of the powerlessness of man, and of the omnipotence—perhaps the caprice—of Fortune or Fate, which no tale of private life can possibly rival." But with all his grandeur and nobility, every Shakespearean hero possesses a 'tragic trait' or a fatal flaw in his own character, and it is from this weakness of his character that tragedy proceeds. The 'tragic trait' in Macbeth is his insatiable ambition ; in Othello it is suspicion ; in Hamlet his brooding nature and in Lear his pride and vanity. The calamities, therefore, do not simply happen, nor are they sent from above—they are the direct and inevitable consequences of the hero's own deeds. and these deeds issue out of character. There is, therefore, something inevitable in every tragedy of Shakespeare.

To this 'tragic trait' Shakespeare adds an element of fate and supernatural powers to make the tragedy possible and complete. The tragic trait, though not very great in itself, becomes fatal to the hero in the circumstances in which he is placed. Hamlet in Othello's place and Othello in Hamlet's place would have led to no tragic action. "Shakespeare's conception of tragedy involved", says Bradley, "over and above character, the suggestion of fatal forces, operating on the actions of mankind, placing these men of power, nobility, strength and courage in just those situations with which they are incapable of dealing." His tragedy implies "the ruin of a grave and noble nature through the existence of some serious inherent weakness brought into contact with the special hostile circumstances calculated to defeat it." This element of fate so subtly introduced is intensified by other more supernatural elements. In place of the 'character is destiny' theory Shakespeare suggests the doctrine of 'character and destiny'. The ghosts in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, the many references to the divine in *King Lear*, the free use of tragic irony in *Othello*—all call forth visions of the superhuman agencies operating on the actions of man. Fate appears above the state like an invisible actor, playing a principal part, cheating, deceiving, betraying and watching with a grim smile the blundering actions of the miserable hero.

The Shakespearean tragedy is, above all, a drama of conflict. The conflict is both internal and external. The inner conflict exists alongside the outer conflict, but rarely coincides with it. The conflict may be between two individuals or two groups or between two principles, passions or ideals animating the two groups. To one of these groups belongs the hero and the hero is defeated in the conflict. But the inner conflict is infinitely more interesting than the outer one. The inner conflict is psychological, moral or spiritual and it takes place in the hero's soul or mind. The mind or the heart of the hero is made an arena of powerful and torturing opposing thoughts and passions. The defeat and death of a Shakespearean hero is nothing in comparison with the terrible torments of the soul and mind through which the hero has to pass. Who cares for the fight between Macbeth and Macduff ? That

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Collection Bantalab Jammu

Macbeth will be defeated is a foregone conclusion. But Shakespeare has laid bare before us his soul torn by inner conflict and we know not whether to hate Macbeth or pity him. "Better be with the dead", says Macbeth as if bitten at once by a hundred scorpions. So, ultimately, a conflict within the mind of the hero is one of the prime essentials in Shakespeare's conception of tragedy. We have in Hamlet's mind a conflict between his desire for revenge and the moral or religious scruples which withhold him from executing his purpose; in Macbeth's mind there is a struggle between his ambition and his loyalty towards his king; Othello is torn between two powerful passions of love and suspicion and Lear between pride and filial ingratitude meted out to him.

As a means to securing the unity of effect and of tone the inner conflict is normally confined to one figure in each drama. Even in *Othello* and *Macbeth* where the struggle is found in other than the central figure, there is an exception made in favour of the hero. As a further means of securing this unity of effect, Shakespeare has rendered the minor figures as well as the feminine characters subordinate to the central hero. All the women characters of his great tragedies are quite unimportant in comparison with those who fill the romantic comedies of his earlier or later years. The women characters are either mere puppets and shadows as the Queen in *Hamlet* or Ophelia, or they are fitting foils for the heroes like Desdemona and Lady Macbeth or they are simply undistinguised monsters like Goneril and Regan.

Shakespearean tragedy ultimately leaves two kinds of feelings in the heart of the readers—the feeling of awe and of sympathy. We feel awe at the fall of the great hero while the feeling of sympathy is evolved in the way in which the hero meets his end. When a Shakespearean hero dies "a medley of emotions is left in our heart, pain at his tragedy, admiration for the noble qualities in him and the promise of better things to come". It is a state of 'calm of mind, all passion spent'. "The weary calm of Hamlet, Othello's great last soliloquy, Lear's innocent awakening and the tired musings of Macbeth—on these, and not on death alone, the curtain-folds sweep down."

14

The Shakespearean Tragic Hero

In his conception of the tragic hero, Shakespeare surpasses even the Greek conception of tragedy as laid down by Aristotle. Shakespeare, of course, accepts the Greek conception of the hero, yet he adds his own grandeur and dignity to him. In order to enter into the spirit of the Shakespearean tragedy it is, therefore, essential to understand the common characteristics shared by all his tragic heroes.

The hero occupies the central position in the Shakespearean tragedy. It is he who suffers tremendously and it is in his fate

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu
that the tragic spirit of the play is involved. Though the Shakespearean tragedy brings before us a considerable number of persons, it is essentially a story of one person, the hero, or at the most of two—the hero and the heroine. The heroine, however strong and dominating in the beginning, is subsequently thrown into the shade when the tragedy approaches its climax. In fact, Shakespearean heroines are either merely puppets and shadows as the Queen in *Hamlet* or Ophelia, or they are fitting foils for the heroes like Desdemona and Lady Macbeth or they are simply undistinguised monsters like Goneral and Regan. It is, therefore, the hero whose life-story and ultimate death from the theme of the Shakespearean tragedy.

The first common characteristic of all his tragic heroes is that they are all great and eminent person—skings, monarchs, princes or great generals. For this Shakespeare was indebted to Aristotle who said that the tragic hero "should be someone of high fame and flourishing prosperity." Shakespeare's tragic heroes are, therefore, all eminent persons—Lear is a mighty king, Macbeth a renowned general, Othello an unchallenged warrior and Hamlet the Prince of Denmark. The great advantage of this conception is that it imparts to the tragedy an air of universality. Prof. Nicoll says, "The presence of a person of prominence as a hero gives the sense that more involved than is apparent on the surface." With the fate of a king or a great general is involved the fate of a nation and therefore, his fall implies the fall of a whole country or empire. Prof. Bradley remarks that "his fate affects the welfare of a whole nation or empire, and when he falls suddenly from the height of earthly greatness to the dust, his fall produces a sense of contrast of the powerlessness of man and of the omnipotence—perhaps the caprice—of Fortune or Fate, which no tale of private life can possibly rival."

The Shakespearean tragic hero is not only always great, he is generally good also. All Shakespeare's heroes possess certain very excellent qualities. When we see a noble and virtuous person suffering tremendously for slight mistakes and errors which they could not possibly help, our hearts are filled with pity and awe. Prof. Bradley says, "The tragic hero with Shakespeare need not be good, though generally he is good, and therefore at once wins sympathy in his error. But it is necessary that he should have so much greatness that in his error and fall we may be vividly conscious of the possibility of human nature." Consequently, Macbeth and Othello are renowned warriors who served as pillars to their respective countries. Their virtue of heroism could never be challenged. Lear in spite of his pride, which was the natural outcome of his old age, is a gentle and meek king. Hamlet's nobility of heart is simply venerable. The question then arises as to why such noble spirits suffer in God's Court of Justice. This is a deep and eternal mystery to which Shakespeare offers no and the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

presence of this overpowering mystery is essentially the very spirit of the Shakespearean tragedy.

In spite of their greatness, nobility and virtue, Shakespearean heroes, one and all, possess one "tragic trait" or a flaw in their character and from this weakness in their character emerges the whole tragedy. Each tragic hero has a marked weakness in him, which leads to tragedy. Macbeth possesses indomitable and insatiable ambition : Othello is a man of suspicious nature : Lear is proud and haughty and Hamlet possesses a wavering spirit. These tragic traits are not great in themselves but they become fatal under the circumstances in which the heroes are placed. Shakespearean tragedy implies 'the ruin of a grave and noble nature through the existence of some serious, inherent weakness brought into contact with the special hostile circumstances calculated to defeat it." Shakespearean heroes who are men of power, nobility, strength and courage are placed in just those situations with which they are incapable of dealing. Therefore, tragedy falls on the Shakespearean hero not from above but proceeds from the character and actions of the hero himself. The hero is confronted, as a rule, with grim fate, malicious superhuman agencies and hostile circumstances in the hands of which the hero acts like a puppet and meets his doom.

The Shakespearean hero suffers tremendously in two ways. He suffers internally as well as externally. In other words, he has to face defeat and death at the hands of his adversaries on the one hand and has to undergo terrible psychological, moral and spiritual conflict and crisis on the other. The internal suffering is infinitely more terrible than the external suffering. The defeat and death of the Shakespearean hero is nothing in comparison with the terrible torments of the soul and mind through which the hero has to pass. The inner conflict is, therefore, an essential common feature of all Shakespearean heroes. Thus, we have in Hamlet's mind a conflict between his desire for revenge and the moral and religious scruples which withhold him from executing his purpose ; in Macbeth's mind there is a struggle between his ambition and his loyalty towards his king ; Othello is torn between two powerful passions of love and suspicion and Lear between pride and filial ingratitude meted out to him.

Ultimately, when the Shakespearean hero dies, our hearts are filled, in each case with awe and sympathy. We feel awe at the fall of the great hero while the feeling of sympathy is evolved in the way in which the hero meets his end. When the hero dies "a medley of emotions is left in our heart, pain at his tragedy, admiration for the noble qualities in him and the promise of better things to come." At the death of each Shakespearean hero, we are tempted to pronounce : What a piece of work is man !"

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Conflict in the Shakespearean Tragedy

Prof. A. Nicoll observes that "all drama ultimately arises out of conflict. In tragedy there is ever a clash between forces, physical or mental or both, in comedy there is ever a conflict between personalities, between the sexes or between an individual and society." To use Aristotle's phrase, "pity and terror" issue in a tragedy from conflict ; while in comedy, too, the essence of the comic is dervied from the same source. To quote the remark of another great critic. "Comedy is a bloodless conflict between good and evil ending in the triumph of good : while tragedy is the same conflict, involving sacrifice of good but also punishment of evil." The Shakespearean tragedy, then, is a long chain of conflicts of manifold varieties. All the great tragedies of Shakespeare present at least four types of conflict—the conflict between good and evil, hero's conflict with fate and supernatural powers, the external conflict against the adversary in which the hero is involved and lastly the terrible internal conflict raging within the mind and heart of the hero.

The essence of the Shakespearean tragedy lies in the presentation of the eternal conflict between good and evil. Shakespeare believed that evil does exist—evil that is in perpetual conflict with good. This conflict between good and evil involves sacrifice of the good and also punishment to the evil. It brings us into the very root of things and confronts us with the deepest mystery of life. How is it that good suffers at the hands of evil in God's court of justice ? To this question, Shakespeare gives no answer and leaves us haggard and woe-begone in solemn atmosphere of awe and grandeur. Prof. Dowden says, "Its (of a Shakespearean tragedy) subject is the struggle of good and evil in the world." The two come in conflict in the Shakespearean tragedy and in this struggle good is always strangled. Desdemona is killed in spite of her spotless chastity ; Duncan is killed in spite of his humility and grey hair, Cordelia dies in spite of her unwavering filial devotion and kindness and Hamlet himself dies in spite of his noble qualities of head and heart. Such is the eternal conflict at the very root of the Shakespearean tragedy, as it is also at the very root of the world itself.

The hero of the Shakespearean tragedy has to face two distinct conflicts, the external and the internal. The inner conflict exists alongside the outer conflict but rarely coincides with it. The purely outward conflict catches the eye first. Here is a struggle between two physical forces, or between two characters, or between two minds or between a person and a force beyond him. To one side belongs the tragic hero who is defeated in the struggle. The outer conflict is the most primitive of all types of tragic struggle and therefore it requires only a master-mind to raise it to the height of impassioned art. All tragic heroes of Shakespeare have to face the external conflict. Thus, in Othello, we have the outward conflict

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

between Othello and Iago. In *Hamlet* there is the outward conflict between Hamlet and the ghost, between Hamlet on one side and Claudius. Laertes and Polonius on the other. In *Macbeth*, similarly, there is the conflict between Macbeth and Duncan's party led by Macduff and Malcolm.

Along with this outer conflict there is always an inner conflict which is infinitely more terrible and awe-inspiring than the former. The inner conflict is psychological, moral or spiritual and it takes place in the hero's soul or mind. The mind or the heart of the hero is made an arena of powerful and torturing opposing thoughts and passions. The defeat and death of a Shakespearean hero is nothing in comparison with the terrible torments of the soul and mind through which the hero has to pass. That Macbeth will be defeated against Macduff is a foregone conclusion. But above and beyond it, Shakespeare has laid bare before us his soul torn by inner conflict and we know not whether to hate Macbeth or pity him. "Better be with the dead", says Macbeth as if stung at once by a thousand scorpions. Or again, with what agony Lady Macbeth utters, "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh !" Similarly, we have in Hamlet's mind a terrible conflict between his desires for revenge and the moral or religious scruples which withhold him from executing his purpose. Othello is torn between two powerful passions of love and suspicion and Lear between pride and filial ingratitude meted out to him. So ultimately the conflict within the mind of the hero is one of the prime essentials in the Shakespearean tragedy.

There is yet another conflict through which the tragic hero of Shakespeare has to pass and without which the Shakespearean tragedy is not complete. It is the hero's struggle against his fate and other supernatural powers bent upon deceiving and destroying him. The "tragic trait" in the character of the hero is not sufficient in itself to bring about the hero's downfall. It becomes fatal under the most hostile circumstances in which fate places him. The hero has to fight desperately against the malicious fate and other supernatural forces only to fall at last. As Bradley says, "Shakespeare's conception of tragedy involved over and above character, the suggestion of fatal forces, operating on the actions of mankind, placing these men of power, nobility, strength and courage, in just those situations with which they are incapable of dealing." Thus, it becomes a very uneven battle between the hero and his fate which is infinitely more powerful than the man. Knowing that he will be defeated in his fatal contest against fate, the hero fights and dies heroically. This is the grandeur of man and this is the dignity and pity of human life and this is ultimately the last impression left on our mind by the Shakespearean tragedy.

16

Plot Construction of the Shakespearean Tragedy

There is no denying the fact that Shakespeare was too great

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

a poet and dramatist to bind himself to any fixed and arbitrary scheme regarding the construction of the plot. Variery is the salt and the very spirit of the Shakespearean tragedy. Yet on a minute analysis of the plots of his various tragedies, we may discover certain common features in them. A composite study of these various common factors may be called the technique or the plot-construction of the Shakespearean tragedy.

Every tragedy of Shakespeare may roughly be divided into three parts—1. Exposition, 2. Development, 3. Catastrophe.

The exposition may roughly be called the introduction of the play. It generally occupies the first few scenes of the first Act. In exposition, we are introduced into a little world of persons and acquainted with their positions, circumstances and their relations with one another. Suggestive hints are also given in the exposition about their characters and we are made keenly interested in their further dealings. This situation is not one of conflict but it portends conflict. In a few scenes, the situations begin to arrest, startle and excite us with speeches, actions and events without revealing the dramatist's design. The exposition in *Macbeth* covers the first five scenes of the first Act. In these five scenes, we are introduced to Macbeth and Banquo as great warriors and generals of King Duncan's army. It has also been pointed out that Macbeth had even some relationship with the king. The ambitious nature of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as well as the criminal intentions of both of them have been hinted. The way to conflict and crisis has been suggested skilfully by the dramatist, with the result that we curiously ask "what next !" The purpose of the exposition is served.

Thus, usually, the Shakespearean tragedy begins with a short but very exciting scene. This scene is usually marked with vigour, speed and thrill and arrests the attention of the spectators from the very outset. The opening of *Macbeth* is remarkably alarming. The first secne is only twelve lines long but its influence is terribly strong.

On the heels of the exposition follows the development of the plot. Usually, the development covers the second, third and fourth Acts along with a part of the first and a part of the fifth Act. The development is a long stress or chain of conflicts and crises alternately rising and falling. The rise and fall in the tension of the conflict form the very spirit of the play. The author provides for secnes of relief after highly exciting and emotional scenes by way of contrast which help in bringing out the full force of the tragic effect. The secne of the grave-diggers in *Hamlet* and the "knocking scene" in *Macbeth* are beautiful examples of comic relief which add tremendous poignancy to the force of the tragedy. Sometimes, Shakespeare introduces a secondary plot to universalise the impression of the tragedy. The Gloucester story in *King Lear* is a perfect example of the underplot. Seeing the two parallel stories, we begin to feel that King Lear is not merely an individual personality nor is

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Gloucester—they stand as the symbols of affliction and the hands of human ingratitude. The appeal passes from the individual to the universal. It is through such varying phases that the plot of the Shakespearean tragedy develops, always maintaining the unity of impression at its base.

Thus, the movement of the rising and falling conflicts continues right up to the catastrophe, but one side is distinctly felt to be on the whole advancing up to a certain point against the other and then on the whole declining before the reaction of the other. There is, therefore, felt to be a critical point in the action which also proves to be its turning point. It is critical because the advancing force has asserted itself victoriously, gaining almost all it desired, whereas in reality, it is on the point of being turned down finally by the vanquished force. This crisis comes somewhere in the third Act of the play. The playwright has to handle this stage very carefully ; He has to see that the catastrophe does not come too suddenly or unnaturally. There is a momentary pause at this height, followed by a counter action which begins slowly in the beginning but soon gathers force and speed. The persons of the counter action have to be introduced by the author. The hero is sometimes driven out of the stage for a long time during which the counter-action has to gather force. Macbeth, Hamlet and Lear—all have to be taken out of the main action for some time.

Thus, with the continual decline of the one party and continual rising of the counter-action, catastrophe slowly emerges. The catastrophe does not in the least surprise us. The catastrophe does not fall or simply happen, it inevitably emerges from the character and actions of the hero. Sometimes, just before the final catastrophe, a gleam of false hope lights up the darkening scene and vanishes away like the last flickering gleam of an extinguishing candle. It leaves a deep impression of the futility of human actions and vanity of human wishes. The catastrophe inevitably falls, leaving upon our mind and heart a medley of deep impressions of awe, pity, sympathy and admiration.

17

Shakespeare's use of the supernatural in his dramas

Shakespeare has made frequent and free use of the supernatural in his dramas. The importance of the supernatural agencies in the Shakespearean drama can hardly be exaggerated. Commenting upon the significance of the supernatural elements in the Shakespearean plays, Prof. A. Nicoll remarks. "By this means an otherwise sordid story of murder and revenge has been carried to higher level and assumes atonce a peculiar significance of its own." In other words, the supernatural element plays a very vital role in heightening the effect and in universalising the appeal of the Shakespearean play. In tragedies specially Shakespeare makes abundant use of the supernatural. The witches, ghosts, apparitions hallucinations and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

malignant fate render the Shakespearean tragedy tremendous and awe-inspiring. They bring home the insignificance and helplessness of human beings in the presence of these mighty forces and confront us with the deepest mystery and pathos of human life. Their presence implies the existence of a superhuman force which delights in the agony and suffering of human beings and plays with them as a cat plays with the mice.

Broadly speaking, Shakespeare uses four types of supernatural powers—ghosts, witches, fairies and fate. Of these, ghosts and witches are reserved for the tragedies and fairies for comedies. Fate is a common factor with a propensity towards the tragic effect.

(1) **Ghosts.** Ghosts represent the most crude form of the supernatural. Ghosts and ghostly apparitions were widely used in literature by the ancients in the medieval times when people literally believed in their existence and reality. Even in the Elizabethan times people believed in them and therefore Shakespeare made full and free use of ghosts and apparitions in his tragedies partly to cater for the general taste of his audience and partly to heighten the tragic effect of his tragedies. But Shakespeare never represented the ghosts in the traditional crude and loathsome forms. He invested even the repulsive ghostly figures with beauty, grandeur and art. They weave a kind of impenetrable atmosphere of mystery and awe round his tragedies. They are "a reminder of the existence and immanence of more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our everyday philosophy ; a warning that at all times, but worst in its lapses, humanity has to reckon with not flesh and blood alone, but principalities and powers of the unseen world." The ghosts in Shakespeare are of two types—the subjective and the objective. The subjective ghost is supposed to be visible to one character only who sees it and not to other characters who are present on the stage. The audience can, however, see it present on the stage. Banquo's ghost in *Macbeth* is a subjective ghost because it is visible to Macbeth only while Lady Macbeth and other persons present in the banquet hall could see nothing. The subjective ghost is, therefore, merely a product of the heated imagination of the person concerned. Lady Macbeth reminds her Lord : "This is the very painting of your fear !" Hallucinations may also be treated as a type of the Shakespearean subjective ghost. The "air drawn dagger" seen by Macbeth in his murder-chamber is also a kind of subjective ghost. Macbeth, the valiant hero who could wade through fields of blood, trembled at the sight of the dagger and murmured :

> Is this a dagger which I see before me,
> The handle towards my hand ?
> ..... or art thou but
> A dagger of the mind, a false creation
> Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ?

The second type of ghost in Shakespeare is the objective ghost

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

which is supposed to be visible to all the characters present on the stage as well as to the audience. The ghost of Hamlet's father is an objective ghost.

(2) **Witches**. Witches reperesent the second form of the supernatural used by Shakespeare in his tragedies. Witches are as ancient in their origin as the ghosts and the Elizabethans believed in their existence. Witches were usually represented in the Elizabethan age, and earlier too, as old, withered, ugly, and bearded hags or grotesque women. Scott describes the witches in his well-known book *Discovery of Witchcraft* as "old women, lame, blear-eyed, pale, hideous, wrinkled, lean and deformed. They generally had beards. They were melancholy-looking and horrid. In the superstitious age of Shakespeare people believed in witches and witchcraft." They were associated with evil or Satan and were believed to inflict all sorts of injuries and agonies on human beings. "They are wells of sin springing up into everlasting death ; they are the awful inspirers of murder, insanity and suicide ; they are powers auxiliary to vice which exist outside ourselves." They could only suggest bloody and sinful course to human beings, but could not compel them to commit a sin or crime. They could enter into that soul alone, "where germs of sin lie ready to be quickened into life." Therefore, witches are not omnipotent powers, but only vicious women possessing Satanic witchcraft. Seeing them in the deserted heath Banquo says.

> What are these ?
> They look not like the inhabitants of the earth
> And yet are on it.....
> .....you should be women.
> Yet your beards forbid me to interpret
> That you are so.

In *Macbeth*, for example Shakespeare does not give the slightest hint that Macbeth was compelled by the witches to follow the bloody path. They merely gave a suggestion towards this end. Therefore, Shakespeare does not kill the individuality and the character of the hero even in the presence of the supernatural powers. It is here that Shakespeare far excels all his predecessors in the use of the supernatural in tragic plays. "These witches, therefore, are in part corporeal, in part supernatural, in part the personified temptations of Macbeth himself. There is the sense that we are in touch with infinite, indefinable, and intangible forces of the universe ; and yet there remains a doubt. The subtlety of Shakespeare disarms our preconception whether the conception be of belief or disbelief." Summing up Shakespeare's handling of the witches. Coleridge says, "The Weird Sisters are as true a creation of Shakespeare's as his Ariel and Caliban. They are wholly different from any representation of witches in the contemporary writers. and yet presented a suffcient external resemblance to the creatures of vulgar prejudice to act immediately on the audience."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

(3) **Fairies.** Fairies which represent the third form of the supernatural in the Shakespearean drama, appear in his comedies. If the ghosts and witches represent the darker side of the unseen world, the fairies represent the brighter one. They are little, beautyful and colourful creatures brimming over with joy and playfulness. They meddle in human affairs and play and laugh with them on friendly terms like innocent little children. They mean no harm to human beings. They sing sweet songs from the air and delight the weary human soul. The *Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy of fairies who control the whole of the plot of the play. They have full power over the actions of human beings and therefore control all their, activities. But in the *Tempest* they are under the power of man. Prospero keeps fairies and angels in the palm of his hand and makes them run, or dance or sing or appear or disappear according to his will.

Mr. Clarke has commendably traced the evolution of Shakespeare's conception and use of the supernatural in his plays. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* he says "the fairies are handled in the gay, buoyant, irrepressible spirit of youth. *Hamlet* shows a grave and serious attitude towards the supernatural. Shakespeare has no mood now to deal with the empty, frivolous, meaningless little fairies : the form of the supernatural is the eerie, horrible, terrifying ghosts. *Macbeth* reveals the darkest and most pessimistic phase of Shakespeare's life. He now believes that human beings are surrounded by foul and terrible influences and tempations, aimed at their betrayal and undoing. His fear of the supernatural is no longer physical : it is moral. In *Macbeth* therefore the supernatural powers—viz. the Weird Sisters, exercises greater powers than ever and succeed in their fell purposes. In *The Tempest*, the last play, where Shakespeare uses the supernatural, he emerges from this doubt and fear and gloom, which had burdened him and returns to the freedom and happiness of his youthful fairy fantasy."

(4) **The Fate.** Fate is also to be treated as a form of the supernatural in the Shakespearean plays. Fate is supernatural in the sense that it is a power beyond the control of man. Fate plays as important a part in creating the tragic atmosphere and in bringing about the doom of the hero as ghosts and witches in the plays of Shakespeare. The Shakespearean tragic hero is always a great man of power and nobility but fate puts him in just those circumstances which inevitably bring about his doom. "Shakespeare's conception of tragedy involved, over and above character the suggestion of fatal forces operating on the actions of mankind, placing these men of power, nobility, strength and courage in just those situations with which they are incapable of dealing." His fate irresistibly leads him from folly to folly and crime to crime until the doom befalls him. Fate is a superhuman agency which is malignant, jealous and blind. Malicious gods join hands with fate

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and inflict all kinds of injuries on human beings, Shakespeare remarks in *King Lear* :

As flies to wanton boys
Are we to gods
They kill us for their sport.

Man's destiny is not in man's hands—

It is the stars, the stars above us
That govern our destiny.

The stars are nothing but symbolic representation of Fate. The introduction of fate, therefore, elevates the Shakespearean tragedy from the mundane plane to the plane of deepest mystery, awe and pity.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

INTRODUCTION TO 'HAMLET'

18

The Sources of 'Hamlet'

The earliest version of the story of *Hamlet* was a Latin history of Denmark composed by a scholar named, Saxo, who belonged to the thirteenth century. The story of Amleth or Hamlet is borrowed from the Icelandic stories of Danish Kings, the earliest printed edition of which came out in 1514. From Denmark the story travelled to France. It was in 1570 that Belleforest translated an Italian version of the story into French in his *Histories Tragiques* but an English translation of this French version appeared in 1608 under the title, *Historie of Hamlet*. It has been conclusively proved by many of the research scholars that Shakespeare based his *Hamlet* upon the French version of Belleforest. The argument for this is that in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Polonius is killed in the same manner behind the arras as the councillor is killed in the *Historie of Hamlet*, and Hamlet utters the very same words 'A rat, a rat' just at the Councillor utters in the French version of the story. There are many other points of similarity between the story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and that of Saxo's version such as :

(1) Horvendile and Fengon were the two brothers, who were the rulers of the two provinces of Denmark under the king, named, Porik, just as we have Hamlet's father and Claudius in Shakespeare's play.

(2) In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet's father kills the Fortinbras of Norway and marries Gertrude. Similarly in the French version, we find that Horvendile kills Koll, king of Norway, in the battlefield and marries Porik's daughter, Gerutha, whose son was Amleth or Hamlet. Gertrude is no other than Gerutha.

(3) Just as Fengon is in love with Gerutha, so also Claudius is in illicit love with Gertrude, and just as Fengon murders Horvendile and marries Gerutha and also usurps her husband's province, similarly, Claudius murders his own brother, marries his wife Gertrude, and becomes the King of Denmark.

(4) Amleth like Hamlet poses to be mad merely to take revenge upon the wrong-doer.

(5) In the French version of the story, a yong girl is set on Amleth and a Councillor also spies upon Amleth. Amleth manages

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to kill the Councillor and gets out of the snares of the girl. Similar scenes are enacted in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by Polonius spying upon Hamlet, Gertrude engaging him in an intimate talk, and also Ophelia making love to Hamlet.

(6) A very close similarity lies between Hamlet being sent with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to England for his execution and Amleth being sent with two courtiers for the very same purpose : but then, in both the cases, Amleth and Hamlet escape, while the courtiers are executed.

(7) Of course, the story of Amleth, particularly at the end is far more romantic than the story of Hamlet because Amleth on his return from England finds that his own funeral is being staged, and yet he poses to be mad, sets fire to the King's palace by getting every body drunk and unconscious, and then finally kills Fengon, after which he addresses the people, who make him their King, although he dies in the battle-field at the end. But the story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* does not end like that. We find how Hamlet fights a duel with Laertes, how both of them are poisoned by the sword-cut, how Gertrude is poisoned with wine and how finally Claudius is also killed by Hamlet with the poisoned sword, which was originally meant for killing him.

(8) The names of the characters in the French version of the story are all different from those of the characters in Shakespeare's story except, of course, the names of Amleth and Gerutha which resemble the names of Hamlet and Gertrude.

(9) Many of the critics believe that because Thomas Kyd wrote his play, *Hamlet*, earlier than Shakespeare, therefore, it was quite natural that Shakespeare must have drawn something from Kyd's play. Of course, Thomas Kyd is known for the incidents of blood and horror in his plays, while Shakespeare is known for his emphasis on characters, particularly, on his heroes in the plays, although in Shakespeare's plays also there is often much of bloodshed and horror as we find in his *Hamlet*. In Kyd's play Hamlet is a man of action, while in Shakespeare's play, Hamlet is a man of thought or speculation.

The following are the arguments for supposing that Shakespeare must have borrowed part of the material of his play from that of Kyd's y ap:

(1) Kyd originally wrote a play named *Spanish Tragedy* in which a father takes revenge for a murdered son : and naturally, it is supposed by the scholars that Kyd must have written another play in which a son takes revenge for a murdered father.

(2) Kyd unlike Shakespeare knew French, and he must have read Belleforest's French version of the Hamlet story just as Shakespeare read the English translation of the same French version.

(3) Kyd worked with the players of Lord Chamberlain's theatrical company with whom Shakespeare also worked afterwards.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Naturally, it can be presumed that Shakespeare must have either retouched Kyd's *Hamlet* or freely used the same material for his play *Hamlet*.

19

The Date of Composition of 'Hamlet'

The year 1601 is the probable date of composition, while the year 1602 is the probable date of publication of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

If we consider the metre, the language and the style of the play we feel almost sure that *Hamlet* was composed just after the middle period between the end of the comedies and the beginning of the tragedies. *Hamlet* must have been the first of the four tragedies, the three other of which are *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Lear*.

In *Hamlet* there is some allusion to contemporary theatrical history. The play within the play refers to the travelling players, which must have been Shakespeare's own company that travelled in the provinces sometime by the end of the year 1601. There is some reference in *Hamlet* that the players were tragedians of the city, who travelled in the provinces, and the reason for this was that the players were driven away by some other company of players known as Children Actors, who actually became popular in London in the year 1601.

When Shakespeare had finished all his comedies and began his first tragedy, *Julius Caesar*, he must have thought of *Hamlet*, because according to certain scholars and critics, Hamlet is nothing but an extension of Brutus, who belongs to the class of tragic personalities that go against moral idealism by speculating too much.

The date of composition of *Hamlet* could not be earlier than the year 1601, because nothing is mentioned about this play in Meres' *Palladis Tamia* which is accepted by the scholars as a great authority for many of Shakespeare's plays.

In 1602, a play called *Hamlet* was entered into the *Stationer's Register*, in which we find all the relevant details of Shakespeare's play.

In 1603 we find mentioned in the Quarto edition of *Hamlet* that the play was acted many times by the king's players. Shakespeare we know belonged to the Lord Chamberlain's Company which became in 1603 the company of the king's players with the accession of James to the throne.

20

'Hamlet' as a Tragedy

In a Shakespearean tragedy the hero, who is a man of outstanding personality, suffers most grievously, not because he is directed by Fate or by any other unseen power but because he commits

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

errors of action, which bring out a catastrophe, that ruins not only but also other characters closely associated with him, whether they are opposed or friendly to him. According to shakespeare character is destiny, or in other words, it is some great flaw in the character of the hero that brings about the tragedy. For example, in the case of Othello, it is suspicion ; in the case of Lear, it is dotage or stupidity of old age ; in the case of Macbeth, it is vaulting ambition, while in the case of Hamlet it is his inaction or speculative nature that brings about the tragedy in the play. Nicoll, Lucas and Dowden agree with Bradley that character is destiny in all Shakespearean tragedies. Of course, it does not mean that the hero is absolutely independent of circumstances which are surely more powerful than any man, and which often, if misjudged or misdirected by human action, lead to a tragedy and that is how the tragedy in Shakespeare's plays is brought about. Mark what Bradley says in this connection, 'No amount of calamity which merely befell a man, descending from the clouds, like lightning, or stealing from darkness, like pestilence could alone provide the substance of a Shakespearean tragedy. Job was the greatest of the Children of the East, and his afflictions were more than he could bear, but even if we imagined them wearing him to death, that would not make his story tragic. Nor yet would they become so, in the Shakespearean sense, if they were conceived as sent by a supernatural power whether just or malignant. The calamities of the tragedy do not simply happen, nor are they sent : they proceed mainly from actions, and those the actions of men. This at least may be said of the principal persons, and among them, of the hero, who always contributes in some measure to the disaster in which he with them perishes.'

Although Shakespeare believed in the will power and personality of the hero, yet he could not understand the mysterious circumstances that involve the hero and along with him other characters in the play, who commit no error of action, but who are made to commit the error of judgment in their action by some mysterious happening over which there is no human control. That is the real secret of human tragedy and of all Shakespearean tragedies, although *prima facie* we may find some flaw in the character of the hero and attribute the tragedy of his life to this flaw. But our question is wherefrom did the hero derive his flaw, and then again, why should he play the victim of certain circumstances to which others do not ordinarily fall a victim ? To this question Shakespeare could give no answer.

Then again, in all Shakespearean tragedies, we find conflict between the good and the evil. But do we find any triumph of the good or the evil ? The critics say that although the good is overwhelmed sometimes by the evil yet there is some kind of triumph of the good because of the manner in which the hero, who represents the good, fights against the evil, although he does not win the battle and dies in the fight and wins the sympathy of the reader or the spectator. Shakespeare was never a priest of any moral theory such as that a tragedy should lie in the triumph of the good or in the defeat of the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu
evil. Whetever he saw in actual human life he reflected in his tragedies or in other plays. Shakespeare must have seen in human life how even the greatest man suffers from certain defects with all his other virtues, how he tries to right the wrong and how he involves himself as well as others in the fight, and how at last he either dies or suffers most grievously, which is worse than death. He must have also noticed that there is some irony of circumstances which are sometimes absolutely beyond human control but which crush both the good and the evil under their feet.

The common rules of a Shakespearean tragedy are that the hero must be an exalted person ; he must possess some outstanding virtue, must also be the cause or instrument of the catastrophe, and finally must die or suffer most grievously in his life.

So far as the play, *Hamlet*, is concerned, we find that the hero of the play is the Prince of Denmark, that he is held in high esteem and love by most of the officers and common men of the State, that he has a great flaw in his character, namely, his speculative nature or inaction, that he is also the victim of certain natural and super-natural circumstances or incidents over which he has no control, and last of all, that he dies himself as well as brings about the death of the wrong-doers and others who are innocent.

How can we explain away the supernatural element, namely the ghost of Hamlet's father who urges the son to take revenge, although the son, due to his speculative nature, delays the act of revenge, and thereby, involves other innocent souls in his own tragedy. If Hamlet had been active or prompt in his action, he would have easily killed Claudius while he was praying in repentance. The arguments which are given by Hamlet for not killing Claudius while he is praying are not at all convincing but smack of weakness or superstition. Then again, Hamlet kills Polonius, turns Ophelia mad, and kills Laertes for nothing, though unconsciously. The readers may say that Laertes is visited by his own treachery because he agrees to use a sword with a poisoned point while fighting with Hamlet ; they may also say that Claudius is killed by his own weapon as Gertrude is poisoned by the same cup which was originally meant for poisoning Hamlet. But then, do we not believe that these incidents are absolutely unexpected. Where is then Bradley's theory that is Shakespearean tragedies character is destiny ?

Last of all, how can we account for the escape of Hamlet from the pirate ship and the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when Hamlet was meant to be executed, or even the return of Laertes from France at the psychological moment or the sudden exchange of rapiers between Hamlet add Laertes during their duel or the drinking of the poisoned cup by Gertrude ? Neither Shakespeare nor any of his critics can give any proper explanation of any of these incidents except attributing them to the collocation of mysterious circumstance which are arranged either by themselves or by some unseen hand of complicating or ruining human life which we call tragedy of human life.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

21

'Hamlet' a Tragedy of Thought or of Action ?

A tragedy of thought means a tragedy which is due to wrong thinking, wrong judgment, wrong calculations even delayed thinking or what is known as postponement in habit, or irresoluteness or too much of speculation and imaginativeness which prevents or delays action. On the other hand, a tragedy of action means a tragedy due to impulsive, hasty, and wrong action or due to delayed and misdirected action which bears no fruitful purpose but brings about individual or common ruin.

While considering the play *Hamlet* as a tragedy of thought or action we have correctly to estimate the character of Hamlet and also judge properly all his behaviour and actions. Many of the critics of Shakespeare have been led away to extremes by wrongly thinking that Hamlet is essentially a speculative character, while others have been misled to think that Hamlet is a hasty and impulsive and even explosive actor, and that is why he brings about his tragedy. But before we pass our judgment upon Hamlet's character we should better consult some of the eminent critics who have studied his character more correctly and soberly than ourselves. For example, let us examine at least what Professor Dowden says about the character of Hamlet : "Hamlet is not the exponent of a philosophy ; he has, it is true, a remarkable power of reflection and a tendency to generalise, but he is not a philosophical thinker who seeks to co-ordinate his ideas in a coherent system. Perhaps Ulysses, perhaps Prospero approaches nearer to the philosopher, but neither Ulysses nor Prospero is a wit, and Hamlet is a wit inspired by melancholy. He is swift, ingenious, versatile, penetrative, and he is also sad. And when Shakespeare proceeded to follow the story in the main as he had probably received it from Kyd, it turned out that such subtlety over-reached itself, which Shakespeare recognised as wholly right, and true to the facts of life. Hamlet's madness is not deliberately assumed ; an active disposition is, as it were, imposed upon him by the almost hysterical excitement which follows his interview with the Ghost, and he ingeniously justifies it to himself by discovering that it may hereafter serve a purpose. But in truth, his subtlety does not produce direct and effective action. Hamlet is neither a boisterous Laertes, who with small resources almost effects a rebellion in revenge for a murdered father, nor a resolute Fortinbras, who mindful of dead father's honour, can march through danger to victory. Hamlet's intellectual subtlety sees every question, thinks too precisely on the event, considers all things too curiously, studies anew every conviction. doubts of the past, interrogates the future ; it delights in ironically adopting the mental attitudes of other minds ; it refines contempt into an ingenious art ; it puts on and puts off a disguise ; it assumes and lays aside the antic disposition ; it can even use frankness as a veil. Hamlet, the subtle, is preeminently a critic—a critic of act, a critic of character.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

a critic of society, a critic of life, a critic of himself. The intellectual dexterity and versatility of Hamlet are united with a moral nature essentially honest. He will not hire a couple of assassins to despatch his father's murderer. He will not himself take action until he has evidence of the King's guilt. Like the Amleth of Saxo, he is a lover of truth concealed in craft. His emotional nature though deeply disturbed by his mother's lapse from loyalty, and liable to passionate fluctuations, is sound at heart. He reverences the memory of his great father, a man of action, whom Hamlet resembles as little as he resembles Hercules. He is bound to Horatio by ties of the deepest esteem and affection. He is kind to the poor actors. He expends his utmost energy in an effort to uplift and redeem his mother's faltering spirit. He is over-generous in his estimate of Laertes. He has loved Ophelia as a vision of beauty and innocence, and is proportionately embittered when he supposes that he has deceived himself and been deceived by others. But all his inclinations are towards those, who are unlike himself. He is complex and self-tormenting."

There can be no more correct picture of Hamlet's character than what Professor Dowden has sketched. Hamlet is no doubt intellectually a subtle character but he is not irresolute or hasty or impulsive or even explosive and therefore, we cannot say that he commits any error of thinking or any error of action, which brings about the tragedy in the play. It is but natural for a loving son to be excited unduly when he encounters and communicates with his father's ghost. It is but natural for a moral being to feel rudely shocked at the treacherous murder of his father by his own brother at the faithless character of his own mother, who agrees to marry the murderer of her husband. If he does not slay Claudius while he is praying, it only shows his moral conscience. although it seems to be too subtle a conscience, which is not found in the ordinary human being. But then, Hamlet is not an ordinary human being not because he is the prince of Denmark but because he has many qualities which cannot be found in an ordinary human being.

If Hamlet were merely a speculative, a wavering, an irresolute creature, he could not have escaped from the hands of the seapirates or planned the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern so ingeniously, he could not have staged such a 'mouse-trap' for detecting the guilty conscience of Claudius, he could not have made Gertude feel the pinches of her conscience so bitterly, he could not have, above all, such a great control over all his actions. The killing of Polonius is a mere accident and is committed by Hamlet in a fit of honest anger which is perfectly justified by the treacherous character of Polonius and also by the deception practised by him upon his own daughter using her as the trap for Hamlet. Therefore, we cannot say that Hamlet is a tragedy of thought.

Can we blame Hamlet for his actions which may have brought about the tragedy in the play ? He has not made any conspiracy

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

or engaged any professional assassin for doing away with Claudius ; he does not injure his mother even when she cries out 'Help, help'. He would have never got Rosencrantz or Guildenstern executed had they not been the carrier of the orders of Claudius for his own (Hamlet's) execution. He would have never accepted any challenge for a duel with Laertes. Even in the last scene of the play, he would not have possibly killed Claudius if he had not come to know of the secret conspiracy against his own life by Claudius or had not Gertrude been accidentally poisoned by the same cup of drink which was meant for his poisoning.

Then again, none of the actions of Hamlet is either erroneous or delayed for want of resolution or wrong thinking. Is he wrong in being unduly excited by the revelations made by the Ghost of his murdered father ? Is he wrong in putting on or in putting off his mask of real or unreal madness ? Is he wrong in torturing his mother with the unkindest words or in putting Claudius to a psychological test of the 'mouse trap' ? Is he wrong in getting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern destroyed by the same weapon which would have otherwise destroyed him ? Is he wrong in fighting with Laertes in the grave of Ophelia ? Is he to blame if Ophelia goes mad ? A.W. Verity has commented upon all these acts rather unfairly and has called them impulsive actions, 'There are strong acts, witnessing as a whole Hamlet's extraordinary alertness of brain, his possession of the Vergilian swift mind which sees into the heart of things and seizes the bearings of a situation at once. Yet these acts do not make Hamlet a man of action. They belong to a single category of action, done under extreme pressure of momentary impulse or absolute necessity.'

But then, in our opinion every action of Hamlet is justified because Hamlet, being a strictly conscientious person, cannot quickly decide the line of his action at certain psychological moments ; and that is why he appears to be dilatory, irresolute and speculative. Macbeth, another hero in a Shakespearean tragedy, also appears to be irresolute and semetimes impulsive because he often indulges in soliloquies like Hamlet ; but then, nobody has branded Macbeth as a speculative spirit, nobody has said so far that the tragedy is brought about by his inaction. Similarly, in the case of Hamlet it would be unfair if we say that the tragedy is brought about by inaction or wrong action ; and hence, the very question which has been raised by certain Shakespearean critics, whether the play '*Hamlet* is a tragedy of thought or of action, is an irrelevant question. In the light of modern psychology, there is nothing unusual about Hamlet's thinking or action, and therefore, to say that either his wrong thinking or his wrong action is the cause of his tragedy would be rather wrong. Even to say that Hamlet suffers from some obsession, the obsession of thinking in too refined or subtle a manner as some critics have attributed intellectual subtlety to him, would be wrong because in the human world we find such minds as Hamlet's not very uncommonly.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

22

'Hamlet' as a Play of Unresolved Problems

Many critics have raised funny problems about the play, '*Hamlet*'. Some of these problems are : is Hamlet really mad ? and if not, is his madness assumed ? Then, is he partially mad or in other words, does he have occasional lunatic intervals ? The second problem is why Hamlet behaves so rudely, so strangely towards Ophelia, particulary when he declares that he loves her more than forty thousand brothers could ever do. The third problem is why Hamlet does not kill his uncle when he gets the opportunity of killing him. The fourth problem is why should he kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when they are his old school-fellows, and the last problem is why does Hamlet delay the fulfilment of his revenge upon the murderer of his father even when the Ghost urges him to hasten the revenge.

All the problems, which have been raised, are stupid and irrelevant. In answer to all the problems one by one, we may say that Hamlet is not at all mad, that his madness is assumed, and that he puts on and puts off the mask of his madness conveniently whenever it suits him to do so. Regarding his strange behaviour towards Ophelia, it also forms a part of his assumed madness but his love for Ophelia is definitely genuine. He behaves like a mad man partly as a pose and partly because he suspects that Ophelia, being the daughter of Polonius, is in the confidence of Claudius, and he wants to show to Polonius and Claudius that he is really not in love with Ophelia or that his madness is not due to his love for Ophelia. When there is a method is one's madness, the person who poses to be mad acts in various ways to fulfil his purposes. That is exactly what Hamlet does whenever he meets Ophelia. Besides Hamlet has been so rudely shoked by the treachery and faithlessness of his mother towards his father that he has been embittered against all womanhood ; and that is why he says, 'Frailty thy name is woman.' Some shrewd critics have pointed out in this connection that the shocks which Hamlet has received from his uncle and mother, are sufficient to drive any person mad. It may be therefore, that Hamlet also went of his head for a time when he came to know from the Ghost the secrets of the treachery of Claudius and also when he saw with his own eyes how his mother married her husband's murderer ? So far as Gertrude is concerned we find no clue in the play whether she was a party to the crime of Claudius, or whether in complete ignorance of the sudden death of her husband she submitted to her incestuous marriage with Claudius.

The third problem is why Hamlet does not kill Claudius when he finds him engrossed in prayers, which is the best opportunity for taking the man unawares and killing him on the spot. The arguments which Hamlet puts forward for resisting the temptation of killing Claudius on the spot are not at all convincing ; and that is

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

why this problem alone seems rather difficult to solve, although one may say that Hamlet being a person of emotional or sentimental fits is often as much rash as slow in action. But Hamlet is not throughout rash or slow in action. In certain situations he is quite quick, but whenever he feels disgusted with the world and his life itself, he is very slow in action, For example, when he falls into the hands of the pirates, he does not lose his mental balance but is very prompt in action in not only escaping from the hands of his captors but equally prompt in planning to get Rosencrantz and Guildenstern destroyed by the same weapon which is designed for his own destruction, Hamlet has had many occasions to study the character of these two of his old class-fellows and it is only when he is convinced of their duplicity and treacherous character that he decides to get them destroyed ; and this action of Hamlet is not at all reprehensible from any point of view—from the moral or the dramatic point of view. If Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were not executed. Hamlet would have been executed, and that would have been an abrupt and undramatic end of the play.

The last problem is why Hamlet always thinks but does not act. But is it really a fact that Hamlet does not act. No, he acts rightly and judiciously. He also thinks because thinking is absolutely necessary for deciding the line of action. He is not a superstitious person like others, and that is why he wants to verify the revelations made by his father's ghost by putting Claudius to a severe psychological test by staging a play which he calls 'the mouse trap', and by which he actually come to know that Claudius is the real murderer of his father.

Then again, a person like Hamlet, who has lost his father, who has lost his succession to the throne, who has come to know that his own uncle is the murderer of his father and that his own mother is a treacherous and faithless woman, cannot maintain the balance of his mind always ; and that is why, Hamlet is found occasionally to lapse into soliloquies, which are nothing but varied forms of self-expression of an embittered soul, just as Macbeth after the commission of the murder of Duncan indulges in soliloquies. Any other person with weaker guts would have walked and talked in sleep like Lady Macbeth whose brain is completely unhinged by her guilty consciousness. In the case of Hamlet, we really wonder sometimes why he also does not go off his head because of the various shocks which he has received from the treacheries of his nearest and dearest ones.

23

Poetic Justice in 'Hamlet'

The theory of poetic justice is based upon the theory of Nemesis or retribution in which the ancient Greeks and the Romans believed. The idea of poetic justice is that if a person commits any evil deed he must be punished, because according to ancient Greek belief no evil deed should or can ever go unpunished, as no good deed or virtue

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

should or can go without being duly rewarded. But then, such a belief is only a theary of punishment and reward invented by man out of the fear of God or of some Supreme Power that is supposed to rule the universe. Shakespeare was an observer of facts in the human world. He did not like to be superstitious like the ancient Greeks, because he usually found, as we also find, that the evil often goes unpunished, while the good goes unrewarded ; and that is why he did not like to believe in the man-made theory of retribution or Nemesis or what we call poetic justice in art or literature. In most of the literature of the world whether in dramas or in stories, we find that the writer tries always to make some character commit some wrong and then get him punished for his wrong deed ; and at the same time the writer makes some other character do some good deed and then get him rewarded. This is what is ordinarily done by most of the dramatists, novelists and story-writers.

But Shakespeare's observation and study of human life was different from that of other writers. Besides, he did not like to be a preacher of poetic justice in order to teach his reader or audience any moral lesson by his dramas. Many of the critics, who suffer from the common superstition of poetic justice, have pointed out that Shakespeare observes poetic justice in all his tragedies like other dramatists and writers. They say that in the play *Macbeth*, Macbeth is duly punished for his crime of murder ; in the play *Julius Caesar*, Brutus and other conspirators against their Emperor are duly punished at the end of the play. But what about other tragedies such as *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet* and others ? Is Othello punished for his suspicion ? Are Goneril and Regan who ill-treat their father punished ? Rather, it is Desdemona and Cordelia who die for no fault of theirs. Some of our readers would say that King Lear suffers because he commits the stupidity of his old age by giving away all his kingdom to his daughters before he dies. But then, to give away one's property in old age to one's children is not a crime nor is it a crime for an innocent woman to be suspected by her husband and then to be strangled to death as Desdemona is done to death by Othello. Why does Iago, the motiveless villain, succeed in his scheming.

So, Shakespeare does not observe poetic justice in the same sense as the ancient Greek dramatists used to observe. Shakespeare's idea is to build up a character and show how under certain circumstances he actually acts and not how he should act. Many of the eminent critics have pointed out that Shakespeare puts into all his heroes some great flaw of character which brings out their tragedy but which leads at the same time to the defeat of the evil and the triumph of the good. But then, such an interpretation of Shakespeare's heroes is also not very correct. Every man is born with some defect or weakness but every man does not suffer accordingly. So many persons we find in this world who possess many defects such as vaulting ambition, suspicious or speculative nature, stupidity or dotage of old age, and yet very few of them are actually found to suffer so

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

much in their life. Therefore, it is wrong to impute any defeat to the character of Hamlet or of Macbeth or of Othello and then to attribute his wrong actions to that flaw or defect of character. Why should we not, on the other hand, believe that in the struggle for existence, in the panorama of human life, in the expression of human nature and also in the collocation of various incidents and circumstances there are many factors which are perfectly within human control, while many other factors are beyond human control, and as such they often miscarry and consequently lead to tragedies such as we find in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar* and others. It is no fault of human character to commit any error of judgment of action if one is born with no foresight or power of thinking ; it is no fault of any human personality if he is hasty or impulsive or irresolute ; or on the contrary, it is no virtue or strength of anybody to be determined, purposeful and ready.minded. because all such weaknesses and points of strength are inherent in human nature ; and therefore, if they lead to a comedy or a tragedy of life, the credit or the discredit, they reward or the punishment should not be attributed or awarded to any human being.

This does not mean that Shakespeare was a blind believer in Fate or in some unseen hand or power that regulates human destiny. He did believe that if man escapes from punishment at the hands of man, he is bound to be punished in the long run by some agent of divine justice which may be man or some supernatural being. For example, some critics are tempted to believe that the ghost of *Hamlet* or the ghost of *Caesar* is the agent of divine justice but Shakespeare's conception of the supernatural was not his own conception but the conception of his fellowmen of the sixteenth or any other century which he has reflected in his dramas like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. We do not think that a great artist like Shakespeare was a believer either in the supernatural or in Fate or in the laws of retribution of justice. Of course, if anybody says that poetic justice or the law of retribution is just like the law of causation, namely, that just as a man sows so also he must reap, or just as one commits a bad or a good deed he will be punished or rewarded accordingly, it may sound reasonable ; but even then, there is the question of the human will which operates in human actions in every case either wrongly or rightly, and, therefore, who can say with certainty that every action of a human being is the result of the human will alone or of the influence or pressure of circumstances in which a person happens to move and have his being ? Therefore to apply the law of poetic justice to Shakespeare's dramas would not only be wrong but also unfair.

24

Supernatural

The supernatural in Shakespeare's plays consists of ghosts, witches and fairies. Shakespeare introduces them both in his tragedies and comedies to create and intensify the tragic atmosphere as well as to produce a comic effect. In the comedies

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

he uses the supernatural to produce a comic effect as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. So far as ghosts and witches are concerned, he has introduced them in his tragedies either to reflect the mental condition of some of his characters, of his heroes, or to represent some of the unseen powers, which guide or misguide his heroes in order to bring about the tragedy. In the case of the Ghost of julius Caesar, it serves as the reflection of the guilty conscience of Brutus, who alone sees the ghost and through whom Caesar is avenged. The Ghost of Banquo is the projection of the guilty and repenetant mind of Macbeth, who feels doubly guilty after having committed the double murder of Duncan and Banquo. The Ghost of Hamlet's father is not only a reflection of the troubled mind of his son but also an instigator to him in order to avenge the death of the most treacherously murdered father. The witches in *Macbeth* can be regarded as merely the fumes of dreams of Macbeth's vaulting ambition to be the King of Scotland. They can also be treated as the hand of Fate, which drives Macbeth slowly and gradually to his fate—his coronation as well his overthrow and death.

The Shakespearean critics have pointed out that the ghosts in Shakespeare's plays, particularly in the tragedies, are either subjective or objective or both. A subjective ghost is one that is seen only by the guilty mind and not by others, while an objective ghost is one which is seen by the guilty mind as well as by others. The Ghost of Banquo is subjective in the sense that it is seen by Macbeth only and by no other person. The Ghost of Caesar is seen only by Brutus and not by any body else because it is Brutus who of all other conspirators against Caesar feels most guilty and repenetant at heart. So far as the Ghost of Hamlet's father is concerned, it is both subjective and objective because it is seen not only by Hamlet, the son, but also by Horatio, Bernardo, Marcellus and everybody who ever happens to keep a watch in the night. Hamlet sees the Ghost probably because he needs instigation for egging him on to take revenge upon Claudius for the murder of his father. Bernardo and Marcellus who are most blunt-headed soldiers are made to see the Ghost in order to prove the vivid reality of the Ghost, while Horatio, a scholar, is also made to see the Ghost and also to converse with him only to rationalise the Ghost or the belief in the supernatural, or in other words, to prove that ghosts and spirits are not merely fumes of the human brain but actual realities like human beings or other living creatures of flesh and blood. The Ghost of Hamlet is made to speak unlike the Ghost of Banquo or of Caesar, probably because the instinct of revenge cannot otherwise be aroused sufficiently in order to punish the wrong-doer.

Belief in the supernatural was the characteristic of the age of the Renaissance, but it was slightly rationalised with the advent of the Protestant Reformation ; it was rationalised in the sense that the supernatural represented the psychological reaction to some of the physical or material circumstances in the human mind which often suffers from fits of fear due to guilty consciousness, hallucinations and dreams due to ambitions of life, and even sorrows and pains

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

bodied forth in imagination in the form of obsessions and complexes that trouble the human mind.

Shakespeare used the supernatural in his plays partly in order to provide food for sensations to the vulgar crowd but chiefly to make his dramatic art more poetic and sublime than that of any of his predecessors such as Thomas Kyd, Marlowe, Webster, etc. who sought horrors upon the stage for the sake of horror merely, while Shakespeare used the supernatural in order to give deeper psychological touches, particularly, to the heroes of his tragedies. Shakespeare refines the supernatural in order to make it natural as well as sublime, poetic and delightful. The ghosts and witches in Shakespeare's plays are not mere instruments of horror but instruments of divine justice, divine laws and divine retribution or punishment to the guilty. They are also reflections of thoughts and impulses of the human souls that commit wrongs and injuries, that feel the reactions of such deeds and that are tortured bitterly in order to be led to their tragic end.

The Ghost in *Hamlet* appears at a moment when Hamlet's mind has been sufficiently disturbed and sickened by the death of his father, by the incestuous marriage of his mother with his uncle, as much as by his own fraustration in love and in material advancement, *i. e.*, succession to the throne of Denmark after the murder of the father by his own brother. Hence, the Ghost in *Hamlet* may be considered as the affusion or confusion of the mind of Hamlet. In *Macbeth*, the witches, which are as much airy a fabulous creatures or figments of the heated brain as the Ghost in *Hamlet* or in *Julius Caesar*, are nothing but the wishful dreams of Macbeth's vaulting ambition to be the King of Scotland. That the Ghost in *Hamlet* is nothing but a reflection of Hamlet's desire for revenge or his curiosity for the real cause behind the mystery of his father's sudden death or a divine instrument of taking revenge upon the wrong-doer. That the Ghost is a projection of Hamlet's own mind seems evident from his own words of unconcern when he is told about the Ghost by Horatio. Mark what Hamlet says to Horatio, 'Me thinks I see my father', in reply to which Horatio enquires, 'O, where my lord ?' to which Hamlet says, 'In my mind's eye, Horatio.' Hamlet seems to feel the presence of his father before his mind's eye so much that he even predicts the coming tragedy when he speaks, 'would the night were come ; till then, sit still, my soul ; foul deeds will rise, though all the earth overwhelm them, to men's eyes.' From these words of Hamlet it is clear that Shakespeare wants to use the Ghost as the *Motif* for the tragedy. The Ghost is, therefore, a symbol of Fate or retribution, of revenge upon the wrong-doer, and also an instrument for instigating Hamlet to take revenge. If the Ghost were not an instigator of revenge, he would not have appeared again while Hamlet is talking to his mother and rebuking her and would not have said,

'Do not forget : This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.'

The Ghost is, therefore, the moving force of the dramatic action in *Hamlet* as the witches are the moving force in *Macbeth*.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

But some of the critics have raised the question why the Ghost is not seen by either Gertrude or Claudius who are really guilty ? The answer is that the Ghost is not a projection of the mind of either of them but it is a projection of the mind of Hamlet only as the Ghost of Banquo is the projection of the mind of Macbeth only and not of Lady Macbeth who may be equally guilty like her husband. Another question that is raised is why Hamlet doubts whether the Ghost is a damned spirit from Hell or a good spirit from Heaven ? The answer is that the Ghost reflects the doubts and fears of Hamlet's mind, particularly when every human mind suffers from some kind of doubt and fear when it is harassed by unusual circumstances of life.

We notice further that the Ghost impresses differently the four persons who see it—Bernardo, Marcellus, Horatio and Hamlet. Horatio being a scholar and more rational than other characters in the play does not believe in the supernatural ; but then, when he encounters the Ghost he cannot disbelieve his own eyes. The sceptic or rational mind of Horatio is seized with the same superstition as that of the common man, and Horatio believes that the Ghost has appeared either to reveal some secret treasure which might be hidden in the royal palace or in the kingdom of Denmark, or to warn the King and the people of Denmark against the surprise attack of young Fortinbras against Denmark. But none of the speculations of Horatio comes true. We find in the long run that the Ghost appears only to reveal the secrets of the murder of the old King of Denmark and also to instigate the Prince of Denmark for taking revenge upon the treacherous murderer. The Ghost appears at least four times during the action of the play and we find that the Ghost only once reveals the secret of the murder and other times instigates Hamlet to hasten the revenge upon the murderer of his father.

But the Ghost in *Hamlet* is not a mere crude presentation of objective reality. It serves also, as has been already pointed out, as an instrument of subjectivity of the human mind, whether rational or superstitious. It reflects, on the one hand, the superstitious mind of the Renaissance, while on the other hand, it represents the rational mind of the Reformation or the New Learning ; but then the common belief in the Ghost as an objective reality was not completely washed off from the minds of the Elizabethans, and naturally, Shakespeare has painted the Ghost as both a subjective and objective reality. Shakespeare makes the Ghost an artistic, psychological, and spiritual force, which shapes the destiny of the whole State and Denmark and which also brings about the tragedy in the play making the reader and the audience feel at the same time the horror and mystery of the supernatural in natural environments. That is why we can say that Shakespeare has tried and has also succeeded amply to make the supernatural natural, but not to make the natural supernatural as his predecessors and contemporaries tried to do. This is the difference between Shakespeare's treatment of the supernatural and others' treatment of the same. Shakespeare has further proved the moral and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025 Grant 1

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

spiritual force and significance of the Ghost by making Hamlet to hatch a play within the play and to catch the conscience of Claudius with the mouse-trap.

25

'Hamlet' and the Elizabethan Stage

Shakespeare never claimed to be original either in the invention of the plots of his plays or in the observance of the rules of the dramatic art. We can, on the other hand, regard him as rather conservative in the observance of the rules of the dramatic art which were already prevalent during his time, whether they were the rules laid down by his immediate predecessors or by the ancient dramatists of Greece and Rome. According to some critics, the real talent of a great artist lies not in mere inventions but in the best use of the existant rules or conventions of the stage or the dramatic art. So, from this point of view, Shakespeare was never original.

Shakespeare was an actor, a playwright and also a stage manager, and that is why he had the advantage of studying, analysing and also judging the limitations of the conventions of the stage as well as of the dramatic art. So far as the Elizabethan stage is concerned, there was a great lack of scenery, curtains and many other movable and immovable devices of the stage. The spectators used to occupy seats nearest to the stage surrounding it and sometimes mounting upon it. Considering these limitations, it was very difficult, if not impossible, to write too many long scenes for the plays. For this reason, Shakespeare had to shorten his scenes and sometimes to cut down the number of the scenes of his plays. So far as *Hamlet* is concerned, it has many as twenty short and long scenes. The peculiarity of these scenes is that they are shown upon the stage, without any rise or fall of the curtain, at the end of each scene. The end of each scene is indicated by the use of one rhymed couplet. The rhymed couplets at the end of the scenes are in contrast with the unrhymed blank verse which is used throughout the play. For example, the end of second scene of the second Act is indicated by the following couplet.

'The play is the thing
Wherein I will catch the conscience of the King'.

The sound of rhyming of the two words, *thing* and *king* is just like the sound of the bell that rings at the fall of the modern stage at the end of each scene and Act. Then again, upon the Elizabethan stage the plays used to be presented in daytime. There were no lighting arrangements except the insufficiently bright torches. Hence, it was necessary for Shakespeare and other playwrights to indicate the time of the day or the night by some other contrivance. But upon the modern stage the change of scene and of time is indicated by some mechanical contrivance. Shakespeare overcame all these limitations of the stage property by his poetic and artistic touches to the play. In spite of the limitations and poor conditions of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

stage-production Shakespeare's dramatic art attained its own height of excellence.

Mark how in the opening scene of *Hamlet* the time is indicated by the significant questions and replies of the characters in the play. Mark how Bernardo says to Francisco. '*It is now struck twelve : get thee to bed*'. Mark also how Bernardo describes the hour when the Ghost appeared :

'Last night of all,
When yond same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven,
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one—'

The time of the disappearance of the Ghosts is also indicated by the crowing of the cock, because all people know that the cock generally crows at dawn. The words of Horatio also, while he points to the North, are equally significant of the morning hour particularly because of their poetic touches :

'But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks over the dew of yon high easter hill.'

Shakespeare's art of word-painting makes up all the deficiencies of the Elizabethan stage.

Then again, Shakespeare suffered from the handicap of female actors and even of good male actors. Shakespeare had to train boys to play the female role ; and he had also to coach up the male characters in his plays. While writing the plays, Shakespeare had to keep an eye over the boy actors as well as the adult male actors, and he adjusted his plays accordingly without sacrificing in the least the dramatic significance and excellence of the roles of the various characters. Shakespeare had to compose his plays according to the acting abilities of the boys and the adult males who played the roles of the characters in his plays. He was perfectly aware of the limitations of the Elizabethan stage and the Elizabethan audience, and of the Elizabethan actors. He gives expression to his views about the stage, the actors and the audience particularly in *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. In *Hamlet* we find how he gives instructions for acting for composing and managing the stage, all of which instructions clearly indicate what an insight he had into the psychology of the players and the audience. That is why, we say, that Shakespeare possessed an unusual gift of adaptation. His dramatic art, therefore, possesses conservatism as well as liberality particularly in harmonising the defects of the one with the excellences of the other.

26

Local Colour in 'Hamlet'

Local colour means the atmosphere or picture of certain customs manners, dress, ways of living, culture, traditions, beliefs—political or religious, and even superstitions of a particular time and place

CC-0 Agamjeet Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS, 2025

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

which form the background or setting of a play. So far as Shakespeare is concerned, he has written many plays depicting or reflecting the history and life of many of the European countries such as Italy, Denmark, England and Scotland. He has reflected in some of his plays, such as *Julius Caesar*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Henry V*, and other historical plays, some local colour of the countries and their people that form the background and also the characters in these plays. It does not mean that he has introduced too many details of local colour in these plays ; but surely, there are a few touches which clearly indicate the atmosphere of the countries, town or cities, people or their ways and manners, dress, food and drink, beliefs and ideas, and even some of the words and phrases which are used by people of other countries than England. It does not, however, mean that Shakespeare had travelled abroad or that he had seen any of the countries which he mentions in his plays or which he has depicted in them. It does not also mean that Shakespeare, while writing about Julius Caesar or about the Prince or the King of Denmark or about the Jews and the Christians of Venice had painted exactly the picture of the particular time to which the incidents or events in the play actually belong.

In *Hamlet* as much as in *Othello* and in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare has really created the illusion of reality, particularly, of geographical and historical reality, although here and there he has created also the illusion of reality in respect of certain words and phrases, certain notions, views, beliefs and even superstitions which are spoken, used and observed by the people of the various countries such as Denmark, Italy, Africa. The local colour in *Hamlet* is comparatively much smaller than that in *Othello* or in *The Merchant of Venice*. The local colour in *Hamlet* is mostly in the form of allusions to Danish political affairs, its academic institutions and its cultural aspects in the world of art, court life and manners.

Some of the Shakespearean critics or scholars have raised the pertinent question that if Shakespeare did not go abroad how did he manage to secure so much of knowledge or information about Danish life or history, or of Italian life and manners which he has painted or reflected in *Hamlet* or in *Merchant of Venice* ? The answer is simple. Shakespeare came in close touch with many of the tales or accounts of foreign travel : and furthermore, he collected all sorts of information about foreign countries from some of the actors like William Kemp, George Bryan, and Thomas Pope who had travelled abroad. Some of such actors helped him with the history of the political affairs of Denmark which he has reflected in *Hamlet*. Of course, we do not mean to say that Shakespeare has painted in *Hamlet* medieval Denmark ; on the other hand, we should say that he has painted the sixteenth century Denmark. We must not forget in this connection that Shakespeare possessed an extraordinary power of imagination by means of which he could visualise quite graphically

CC-0. Panjab University Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the picture of other countries even on the basis of meagre information or knowledge of those countries or of their people.

So far as the play, *Hamlet*, is concerned, we are struck first of all, by the Danish names such as Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern. Voltimand and Gertrude. As a matter of fact, during the accession of James I to his throne in 1603, an ambassador of the name of Rosencrantz actually came from Denmark. Rosencrantz is said to have been a colleague to Guildenstern in the Council of Regency during the minority of Christian V, King of Denmark. Shakespeare's knowledge of the royal palace and castle of Elsinore also was acquired from some of his fellow-actors, and that is why he has been able to describe both the inside and the outside of the palace of the Danish King. It is also a fact that both Hamlet and Horatio had been students of the same university of Wittenberg where the younger brother of the King of Denmark had been a student in 1592 or 1593. It is also known that Christian IV. King of Denmark, was addicted to drinking like Claudius, and that drinking was a popular or rather universal evil in Denmark. It is also a fact that whenever the King of Denmark used to indulge in any public drinking, it used to be celebrated by the blowing of the trumpets and the firing of the guns. There is a reference in *Hamlet* about the Danish preparation for war against Poland, which also is corroborated by the history of Denmark. Last of all, it is a strange coincidence that King James's wife was a Danish Princess, named, Anne. Shakespeare composed the play *Hamlet* probably to pay compliments to the English King and the Danish Queen.

27

Contemporary References and Allusions in 'Hamlet'

We know that Shakespeare was a playwright, and actor, manager and a producer : and such, he had the most intimate knowledge of the dramatic art, the art of acting, the art of management of the stage, and also, the art of exhibiting the plays upon the stage. All these combined experiences of the theatre gave him an advantage over other playwrights or actors or mere managers or exhibitors of plays.

Shakespeare's company played in the well-known Globe Theatre, and we find references to this fact in at least two of his plays, namely, in the Prologue to *Henry V* and in Jacque's speech in *As You Like It*. *Hamlet* too holds many allusions and references to the Elizabethan theatres and plays. Scholars like Brandes, Bradley. Dover Wilson and others have pointed out to us that the character of Hamlet is essentially the character of an actor which we find sufficiently evident from the words of Hamlet who instructs the actors who play their roles in the play within the main play. In the second Act of the play, we find how a group of actors arrive at Elsinor and Hamlet instructs them how to play the parts of Pyrrhus, Priam and Hecuba, this little scene or incident proves conclusively

CC-0 Agnigarh and Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that Hamlet must have baen some particular character, either Shakespeare himself, or some well known player associated closely with Shakespeare in their common trade of acting and playwriting.

There is no doubt that the success of *Hamlet* mainly depends upon the acting of the role of Hamlet who must be the shadow of some actor of Shakespeare's time, otherwise how could the hero Hamlet in the present play give such significant and valuable instructions to the players of the play within this play, how could he himself play the various roles of the courtier, the scholar, the soldier and even of the mad man to such perfection ?

There are many topical allusions in the play *Hamlet*. The minor allusions of topical interest are the solar eclipse of 1598, the doctrine of equivocation of the Jesuits, the horsemanship of Lamond or of the Earl of Southampton. But the most interesting allusion is to the rivalry of the theatres of his time which we find so elaborately mentioned in the second Act of the present play. The reference to the contemporary theatres is carried on in the second scene of the third Act. According to Lee, there was a great rivalry between the Globe Theatre and the Black-Friar's Theatre. The band of travelling actors, who visited Elsinore, belong to Shakespeare's own dramatic company. The mention by Rosencrantz to Hamlet of the travelling players as the tragedians of the city of London is a reference to Shakespeare's theatrical company, which was compelled to move from place to place for their patronage from the various noblemen and respectable audience. There is a difference of view with regard to the reason behind the travelling theatrical companies. Some persons believe that the Puritans opposed the public performances of the plays in London, while others believe that the Council had passed an order against the growth of theatres and that it restricted their number to two, one of which was the Globe Theatre to which Shakespeare was attached and of which he was partly the owner in his later days. But some of the scholars, who have made researches on this point, believe that the children of the chapel, the by actors of Ben Johnson's plays who played in the Black-Friar's Theatre became extremely popular ; and this popularity compelled the theatrical company of Shakespeare to travel from place to place for some time. Rosencrantz refers to the innovation (i.e., the employment of boy actors) in the second scene of the second Act of the present play. Lee also mentions the growing popularity of the boy actors who cried at the top of their voice upon the stage and became very popular on that account. So the boy actors made the adult actors unpopular and compelled them to travel from place to place in order to seek their patronage and popularity outside London. So, the restriction or inhibition of Shakespeare's theatrical company was not due to any Puritanic opposition or royal disfavour ; it was due to the rivalry of the players some of whom had left Shakespeare. For example, Kemp left Shakespeare and joined the rival theatrical companies. Hamlet accuses the Clown of vulgarity in which the Elizabethan comedians indulged so freely. This accusation is an

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

indirect hit at Kemp who had deserted Shakespeare, but then, Kemp afterwards came back to Shakespeare's company, when actually the accusation was withdrawn from the Quarto edition of the play of 1604. During Shakespeare's time, it was the custom of Cambridge and Oxford Universities to stage only Latin dramas' but then, great regards were paid to Shakespeare when his *Hamlet* was staged in the two leading Universities, Mark how Hamlet says to Polonius in the second scene of the third Act, '*My lord, you played once in the university* ? Polonius replies, *That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor*'. This staging of Hamlet in the two Universities helped a good deal in enhancing its value in the eyes of the respectable audience. The present play *Hamlet* has distinct references to the practice of the boy actors playing the roles of women characters in Shakespeare's plays. Mark what Hamlet says to the players welcoming them most warmly, 'What, my young lady and mistresses ; by your lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine.'

28

Stages of Action in 'Hamlet'

Although Shakespeare does not strictly follow any of the dramatic rules laid down by Aristotle yet we find distinct stages of development in his plays, such as *exposition, rising action, crisis, falling action and catastrophe* : but sometimes these five stages are rolled into three stages without disturbing the harmony of the whole.

So far as *Hamlet* is concerned, it can be divided into three main stages of development of its dramatic action. The Exposition includes all that leads to the *Crisis*, while the *Crisis* and the *Catastrophe* include all that goes before them. The first two Acts cover the *Exposition* : the third Act alone represents the *Crisis*, while the fourth and the fifth Acts make up the *Catastrophe*.

In the Exposition we find how the Ghost reveals the secrets of the murder of Hamlet's father by Claudius, how the Ghost instigates Hamlet to take revenge upon the murderer, how Hamlet decides to put on an antic disposition in order to take the revenge, how Claudius suspects Hamlet's strange behaviour and employs Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in order to discover the real cause of Hamlet's strange behaviour, and how Hamlet also comes to know intuitively the attitude of Claudius to him. Polonius thinks that Hamlet's love for Ophelia is the cause of his madness which Claudius puts to the test by arranging a meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia and by watching them from behind the screen. When the travelling players arrive at Elsinore. Hamlet gets the opportunity of testing the criminal psychology of Claudius by actually staging *a play within the play* which he calls the mouse trap. So, we find at this stage of the drama a conflict between the hero and the villain, that is between Hamlet and Claudius, This confflict is important from

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the dramatic point of view because it helps both Hamlet and Claudius to establish or confirm their mutual views about each other and also to bring out each other in true colours before the public, which is necessary for punishing the villain and rewarding the hero. The play within the play should be treated as part of the *Exposition* and the *Rising Action* of the mian play. The *Exposition* practically extends up to the second scene of the third Act, while the *Rising Action* extends up to the fourth scene of the third Act.

The second and third scenes of the third Act represent the *Crisis* of the play. These two scenes are particulary exciting because in these two scenes the dramatic action works at a great speed. *The plot within the play* serves as the background for the *Crisis*. In these two scenes Hamlet seems to be most active or dilatory in action. He coaches the players of *the play within the play*. *The murder of Gonzalo* which is *the play within the play*, is a graphic replica of the scene of murder of Hamlet's fathers by Claudius. Hamlet calls this play *'The Mouse-Trap'* because with this play he catches the mouse *i. e.* Claudius or rather finds out that Claudius is the real murderer of Hamlet's father as revealed by the Ghost. The play is staged before the whole court of the State of Denmark, and naturally, when Claudius feels the pricks of his conscience on seeing the murder scene before his eyes, the court is convinced like Hamlet that Claudius is the real murderer of the King of Denmark. Claudius leaves the hall, where the play is staged because he cannot stand the pricks of his guilty conscience. He tries to pray but cannot pray because of his guilty soul. Hamlet also does not kill him on the spot because he thinks that if one is killed at the moment of praying he will not be punished but forgive by God when he will go to the other world. But Hamlet kills Polonius by mistake when Hamlet rebukes his mother for having married Claudius, the murderer of her husband, and when she cries for help, which betrays the presence of Polonius behind the arras, who has been commissioned by Claudius to spy upon the talk between Hamlet and his mother.

The *Catastrophe* of the play comes when Hamlet is despatched to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for getting him executed. During this stage of the dramatic action, Hamlet seems to be defeated by his oponent Claudius, who, for the time being triumphs over Hamlet. Claudius, by trying to repeat his crime of murder, hastens the *Catastrophe*. Everything runs apace with the dramatic action. Ophelia goes off her head. Laertes returns from France in order to take revenge upon his father's murderer. Claudius manipulates Laertes against Hamlet. Claudius arranges for a fencing contest between Hamlet and Laertes. He poisons the point of Laertes's sword and also arranges for a poisoned cup of drink to be served to Hamlet during the contest, if the poisoned sword fails by accident. During the fencing contest Laertes stabs Hamlet with the poisoned sword which Hamlet snatches away from Laertes and stabs him. Just at this moment Gertrude, through mistake, drinks the poisoned cup, while Laertes exposes the conspiracy of Claudius

M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Jammu
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR
CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

against Hamlet's life, which at once rouses up the revenge in Hamlet, and he at once stabs Claudius with the poisoned sword. That is how Hamlet, Laertes, Gertrude, Claudius all die in a few minutes bringing about the *Catastrophe* of the play at the lightning speed. That is how the dramatic action of the play moves from *Exposition* to *Crisis* and from *Crisis* to *Catastrophe*.

29

Dramatic Significance of the opening Scene in 'Hamlet'

The opening scene gives out the sum-total of what is going to happen in the play, not in detail, but in a nutshell. It offers certain hints about the future events casting their shadows before. It introduces some of the main characters, some of the main past events which have led to the present situation, which is fraught with a great future. It practically sows the seeds of the tragedy, that is going to follow at the end or in the succeeding scenes of the play.

Shakespeare invariably, whether in his comedies or in his tragedies, offers the reader or the audience a glimpse into the future of the dramatic action, the general trend of the main action of the play by sounding some note of warning in the first scene of the play. So for as the play, *Hamlet*, is concerned, we find a great tension created in the very beginning of the play by the report of the sentinels who keep a watch in the night over the palace of the King of Denmark that some Ghost or some such supernatural being has appeared twice, and it may appear again any moment. That is why brave soldiers like Bernardo and Marcellus or equally perturbed and are equally anxious to be relieved of their night duty because they have seen the same apparition at midnight.

Shakespeare introduces in the very first scene Horatio, who is one of the most important characters in the play, and who explains to the illiterate or half-educated soldiers the real significance of the Ghost. Of course, being educated and also being a sceptic or rather being unduly rational, Horatio in the beginning does not believe in reality of the Ghost at all until he sees it with his own eyes and tries to talk to it but fails because the Ghost is not in a communicative mood. He explains the whole incident as nothing but a great potent of some great future events good or bad that will soon occur. Incidentally, he explains to his soldier friends how the Ghost may be appearing just to give the people of Denmark a warning about the invasion of Denmark by young Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, who is intending to recover some lend from the possession of the King of Denmark which his father had lost to the old King of Denmark in a fencing duel.

Coleridge comments upon the opening scenes of Shakespeare's plays thus ; "With the single exception of *Cymbeline*, the opening scenes of Shakespeare either place before us at one glance both the past and the future in some effect which implies the continuance

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and full agency of its cause, as in feuds and party spirit of the servants of the two houses in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* ; or in the degrading passion for shows and public spectacles, and the overwhelming attachment for the nearest successful war chief in the Roman people, already become a populace, contrasted with the jealously of the nobles in *Julius Caesar*, or they (the opening scenes) at once commence the action so as to excite a curiosity for the explanation in the following scenes, as in the strom of wind and waves in *The Tempest* : or they strike at once the keynote, and give the predominant spirit of the play, as in *The Twelfth Night* and in *Macbeth* ; or finally, the first scene comprises all these advantages at once, as in *Hamlet*."

In the first scene of *Hamlet* Shakespeare introduces two most important things—the ghost and the preparations of Denmark for war against Norway which form the keynote of the play, because the Ghost reveals the secrets of the treacherous murder of the old King of Denmark by his own brother Claudius, and the preparations of war will ultimately lead to the occupation of Denmark by young Fortinbras without any war. These two important events are forecast in the very first scene of the play. Of course, the details of these two events will come out in the succeeding scenes and Acts with the gradual development of the dramatic action.

In the Greek dramas the *Chorus* used to serve the purpose of introduction of the theme of the play to the audience in the beginning of the play. The *Prologue*, in some of the Elizabethan plays, used to serve the same purpose but Shakespeare did away with the *Chorus* and the *prologue*, and that is why in every one of his plays he strikes the keynote of his action in the opening scenes. Shakespeare has his own way of doing things, and that is why he does not strictly follow the dramatic *Unities* of Artistotle or the *Prologue* or *Epilogue* or the *Chorus* of the Greek dramatists.

30

Problem of Delay in 'Hamlet'

Some critics wrongly think that Hamlet's delay in executing his revenge is due to some dramatic situation and not due to his peculiar temperament or mental constitution, be it speculative or irresolute or weak or vacillating. They think that Hamlet should be treated as a dramatic character rather than as a real person. If we were to take Hamlet as a more dramatic character, which undoubtedly he is not, we would be doing injustice to the dramatic genius of Shakespeare, who always believed that while printing any human character in any of his plays he merely held the mirror up the nature, or in other words, his characters are as living human beings. Morelay, Bradley, Granville Barker and others have pointed out that Hamlet's delay in the execution of his revenge is entirely due to his peculiar habit or mind or temperament, which is a blend of the speculative, irresolute, and vacillating cast. They say that Hamlet is not a man to take any hasty step, that he is a conscientious person, that he wants

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2026-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to be perfectly satisfied about the crime or guilt of a person before he should think of punishing him or that he must seek an opportune moment in order to execute his revenge upon the real wrong-doer. That is why Hamlet, in the beginning, does not trust the Ghost so much, although he is tempted to believe in the words of the Ghost. Then, again, he wants to put to the acid test his uncle by staging a *mouse-trap* in the form of a play within the play and thereby to catch the conscience of Claudius, which he successfully does by staging the play of the *Murder of Gonzago*. But some of the critics have raised the pertinent question why Hamlet does not kill Claudius on the spot while he is praying. The arguments which Hamlet puts forward as an excuse for postponing the execution of his revenge are not at all convincing but they smack of a superstitious mind. But then we should not forgot that Hamlet is not an impious, wicked villain like Claudius, he is not even hasty and thoughtless like Laertes, and that is why he argues within himself that he should not kill a man when he is praying, particularly because such a man would go straight to heaven by being forgiven by God. In this respect Hamlet seems to be a perfect Christian who believes in the expiation of sins by prayer.

Hamlet delays the revenge for two or three other reasons also. He wants to verify the revelations of the Ghosts thoroughly by putting to the acid test, not only Claudius, but also Gertrude whether or not she is also a party to the crime of murder of her husband. He finds it out easily by an indirect means in the case of Claudius while in the case of Gertrude by a direct means by rebuking her and torturing her womanly conscience. His killing of Polonius is an accident ; and had it not occurred, his revenge would have been hastened ; but unfortunately, Claudius sends Hamlet away to England diplomatically with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern only to get him executed. But then, destiny ordains it otherwise. Hamlet manages his escape from the hands of the sea-pirates and also succeeds in getting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed in his place by forging a fresh commission to the king of England in the name of the King of Denmark.

Heaven offers Hamlet a chance of executing his revenge upon Claudius when Laertes returns to Denmark and is misdirected by Claudius against Hamlet to play a fencing-contest with him with a view to kill him with a poisoned sword. But here too destiny plays some strick. During the hot fencing about Hamlet exchanges the poisoned sword with Laertes as soon as Laertes has stabbed Hamlet with it, with the result that both Hamlet and Laertes die ; but before Hamlet dies he discovers that Gertrude has mistakenly taken the poisoned cup of drink prepared by Claudius, and therefore, Hamlet stabs Claudius with the same poisoned sword and kills him too. That is how the delayed revenge is perfectly executed, although Hamlet also dies along with his wrong-doers and makes the path straight for young Fortinbras, to succeed to the throne of Denmark without a fight.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Some of the critics compare Hamlet with Laertes and young Fortinbras and say that Hamlet is inactive while the other two are active. The observation may be quite true when we make it a comparative observation, but then, is Hamlet really inactive or lost completely in the pale cast of his thought, or like a philosopher continually hesitates and wavers saying within himself. 'To be or not to be that is the question ? We would be doing injustice to the character of Hamlet if we accuse him of irresolution or inactivity or even weakmindedness as compared with the promptness and enthusiastic action of Laertes and Fortinbras in avenging the death of their father. Young Fortinbras is not at all active but a man of 'unapproved mettle, hot and full', and nothing else, but destiny favours him, and that is why without any labour he becomes the King of Denmark at the end of the play Laertes, on the other hand, is a mere impulsive youth who is emotional and thoughtless and allows himself easily to be fooled by a villain like Claudius. He is a blind fool because he believes Claudius as readily as he disbelieves Hamlet, and therefore, his active spirit deserves no credit. As compared with Fortinbras and Laertes, Hamlet is a far superior soul with a noble mind, a conscientious spirit, a cool-headed intellect, who can weigh correctly the pros and cons of a matter and who has also tremendous patience but not cowardice or timidity or dull brain or irresolute character as some of the critics have wrongly regarded him to be.

If Hamlet were merely speculative or dilatory, how could he so promptly utilise the travelling players to stage a play within the play in order to catch the conscience of Claudius ? How could he forge a commission in order to get Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed ? How could he at all manage to escape from the hands of the sea-pirates ? How could he be quick like lightning in stabbing Claudius with the poisoned sword when he had hardly a second to wait for his own death ?

Granville Barker says in connection with Hamlet's delay in the execution of his revenge : "Hamlet dissipates his will to revenge by contenting himself with wordy thrusts at the conscience of his uncle. Hamlet hopelessly makes a muddle of this business by his impulsive behaviour which spoils the splendid effect of his own contriving. He unnecessarily or unprofitably arouses the King's crafty intelligence by his frequent questioning while the play is going on, acts the part of a chorus (as Ophelia reminds him during the scene) and thus gives a handle to his enemy by frustrating the attempts on his life. He gets forewarned, and he gets fore-armed. If Hamlet, like Horatio, had watched silently the reactions of Claudius, he would have had more overt opportunity of killing his father's murderer. Instead, he plays himself into the hands of his enemy by prematurely revealing his own intentions. Claudius is now more than ever before certain that Hamlet is not at all mad but definitely bent upon vengeance. And what convinces him of this is Hamlet's overdoing his part during the scene. No wonder at all that Hamlet lets slip the opportunity for direct action and becomes the victim of his enemy who loses no

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

time in getting him arrested and sent to England, for 'madness in great ones must not unwatched go.'

31

Soliloquies in 'Hamlet'

There are in all five soliloquies of Hamlet in the whole play. The first soliloquy occurs in the first Scene of the first Act in lines 150-159. In this soliloquy Hamlet expresses his bitter feelings against the infidelity of his own mother in particular and against all women in general, because he finds how his mother marries her husband's brother who s the murderer of her husband. He expresses indirectly his bitter feeling against the treachery of a brother (Claudius) against his own brother (Hamlet's father). Both these feelings disgust Hamlet so much that he is sick of life itself and of the whole human world so that he thinks even of suicide.

These feelings of Hamlet seem to be rather premature, particularly when the Ghost has not appeared as yet nor has it revealed anything about the secrets of the murder of Hamlet's father. But then, Hamlet being an intelligent man, suspects that Claudius must be the murderer of Hamlet's father, and that his mother Gertrude may also be a party to the crime, otherwise how could she agree to marry a man like Claudius knowing full well that her husband was like a god as compared with the beastly Claudius ? How could she hasten her marriage with the murderer of her husband without waiting even for one year to pass. Then again, how could she agree to marry her husband's brother against the laws of Christian marriage ? All this indecent haste on the part of Gertrude and, on top of all, the treachery of Claudius against his own brother disgust Hamlet so much against womanhood, brotherhood, conjugal fidelity, and even the universal treachery in the human world that he even thinks of suicide.

Some of the critics say that Hamlet's feelings at this stage are rather untimely, proving thereby all the more Hamlet's sensitiveness, his morbid temperament, his haste in drawing conclusions from unconfirmed premises, and last of all, his habit of reflection at every step whenever his mind or heart is slightly disturbed by any incident or circumstances. But then, other critics take his first soliloquy as the shadow of the coming events which will bring about the tragedy of his life and of others in the play. Whatever may be the case, it is nevertheless true that all the soliloquies of Hamlet bring out his character in true colours ; but unfortunately, many of the critics have misread and misunderstood the words of Hamlet in these soliloquies, and that is why they have misrepresented his character. Those who want to make a correct analysis of Hamlet's character should better confine themselves entirely to the soliloquies and draw their conclusions from them about Hamlet's character.

The second soliloquy occurs in the fifth Scene of the first Act in lines 92-111. When the Ghost has revealed the real secrets of the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation Chandigarh Funding by KS-M-E 2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

murder of Hamlet's father, Hamlet is so much moved by the revelations that he seems to lose the balance of his mind due to stormy emotions. He assures the Ghost, as he resolves within his own mind, that he will register every syllable of the Ghost's speech in the book of his mind and bend all his energies in order to take revenge upon the murderer of his father and also against his own mother because she has married her huband's murderer. Hamlet seems to be perfectly convinced that Claudius is the real murderer of his father and that Gertrude must have been a party to the crime ; otherwise how could she marry the murderer of her husband ?

In this soliloquy Hamlet also decides to put on the mask of madness or rather of dissimulation so that the world may not be able to know his schemes and designs of taking revenge upon his father's murderer. He would like to follow the same policy of his uncle Claudius who is putting on a smiling face in spite of being a great villain at heart. Hamlet also decides to pretend madness or strange behaviour in order to mislead the world and to achieve his own end —the fulfilment of his revenge.

In this soliloquy Hamlet appears to be a man of action at least from his fiery and sentimental words, although afterwards these words in cooler moments are over-ruled by reason and thereby delay action of Hamlet's revenge. This soliloquy marks the beginning of Hamlet's preparation for avenging his father's death, and from this soliloquy we can draw our conclusions regarding Hamlet's determination to act and not merely to speak and waste his energy by the empty sound and fury of his words.

The third soliloquy occurs in the second Scene of the second Act in lines 525-585. Hamlet indulges in the soliloquy immediately after having listened to the rehearsal of the players. Hamlet is moved by the very emotions of the players who have no genuine cause of sorrow or anger against anybody and yet who seem to be fired from the crown to the toe by genuine emotions. But then, Hamlet regrets that even with such a serious cause of grief and anger against Claudius he has been sitting idle and not taking steps as yet to fulfil his revenge. This contrast between the behaviour of the actors and that of his own makes him cry shame and disgust upon his own soul, and prepares him more stubbornly for the action of revenge. Hamlet calls himself a pigeon-livered creature, a damned coward, an as because he has not taken any action so far in spite of the revelations made by the Ghost. In the first fits of emotion Hamlet seems to be really very much excited and also very strongly resolved to take revenge upon his father's murderer ; but then, soon afterwards, on a second thought, he thinks of staging a play within the play—*The Murder of Gonzago*—which he calls the mouse-trap—and of catching the conscience of Claudius by this trap. This secondary thought comes to him when his emotions cool down and when he thinks more rationally of the whole matter. At this stage, he begins to suspect if the Ghost is really a benign or malign agent of God or that Devil, and that is why he wants to test the revelations of the Ghost

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu
and also put Claudius to the acid test so that if he is really the murderer of Hamlet's father, he would feel the pricks of his conscience when the play, *Murder of Gonzago*, would be played before his eyes.

Some of the critics interpret this particular soliloquy as the first step of the determination of Hamlet for taking revenge and as such, it is important from the dramatic point of view. Hamlet prepares himself for putting Claudius to a psychological test, and when he has found him guilty, according to the revelations of the Ghost, he will not hesitate to take action. This soliloquy reflects upon the rational cool headed mind of Hamlet unlike that of Leartes because here Hamlet does not trust ghosts and apparitions, which are often the agents of the devil and lead man to his ruin ; that is why this soliloquy can be regarded as a mark of Hamlet's cautious character. If Hamlet were like Leartes, he would have rushed to action immediately after he had listened to the words of the Ghost but Hamlet is not like anybody else in the play : he is quite distinct and apart in mind, in heart, in understanding, in judgment and even in his method of action from all other characters.

The fourth soliloquy is the most famous soliloquy of Hamlet which occurs in the first Scene of the third Act in lines 56-88. This is the most philosophic of all his soliloquies ; and from this soliloquy the critics have drawn the conclusion that Hamlet is by nature speculative, and hence he can never be a man of action, for which reason alone he suffers in life and brings about his tragedy. In this soliloquy Hamlet is thinking of committing suicide, but then, like others, he is also afraid of the hereafter, the life beyond the grave, and the horrors of the other world', and that is why he cannot commit suicide. But why should Hamlet think of suicide at all ? He has not as yet taken any revenge upon the murderer of his father, and if he commits suicide at this stage, he would be a great coward and not fit to be the hero of the play. What is the real cause of his thought of suicide, not only in this soliloquy but also in the first soliloquy ? He has not yet met his mother nor yet Ophelia nor even put Claudius to the test of the mouse-trap ; and therefore, why should he bother about suicide or worry about the horrors and punishments in the other world ? Many of the critics have interpreted this soliloquy as the unmistakable mark of Hamlet's cynicism, pessimism, morbidity and even of the beginning of his insanity. How can we justify all the words of Hamlet in this particular soliloquy without branding him an idealist, a dreamer, a cynic, a lunatic ?

The only justification is the dramatic necessity. If Hamlet were like Laertes, the drama would have ended immediately after the Ghost had revealed the secrets of the murder to Hamlet. The delay of revenge is necessary for leading the drama to a *crisis* and then resolving it finally in a *catastrophe*. That is why Hamlet, who is the tragedian in the play, has to be a speculative idealistic, philosophic at times. Besides, the speculative or philosophic nature of Hamlet heightens the stature of his character before other characters in the play. If Hamlet had rushed to revenge on the mere

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

evidence of the Ghost, he would have been as common place a character as other common place characters in the play. But Hamlet is not a common place character ; he is the hero of the play ; he is far nobler and far more intellectual than Laertes, Claudius, Polonius and Horatio. Horatio is a mere scholar but Hamlet is a scholar, soldier, courtier, philosopher and everything that is noble and enviable about human nature. If Hamlet were not what he is, there would have been no drama, no tragedy of the play.

The fifth and the last soliloquy of Hamlet occurs the fourth Scene of the fourth Act in lines 32-75. Just as in the third soliloquy we found Hamlet being stirred to determination for revenge after having listened to the rehearsals of the players, so also in the fifth soliloquy we find that he is similarly stirred to action by the example of the Norwegian army under Fortinbras marching against Poland in order to secure a very small piece of land for the sake of defending the honour of Norway at the cost of twenty thousand soldiers, who die in the battlefield.

In this soliloquy, Hamlet is analysing a man and a beast only to discover that he has proved himself no better than a beast because he has been sitting idle so far without taking any revenge upon the murderer of his father. He also feels that in spite of his power of reason he has not improved in the least, rather, he has grown worse than a beast because his reasoning power has made him vacillating and cowardly in his action. Had he been exactly like a beast he could have surely taken his revenge by now ; but then, reason has made him think over the *pros* and *cons* of the matter and has delayed his revenge. The example of Fortinbras marching against Poland in order to recover a small piece of land and risking twenty thousand soldiers inspires him because Hamlet also has got a far greater cause to risk himself and everything in his possession in order to fulfil his revenge and, therefore, he prepares his mind again to bend all his energy for obeying the whishes or the commands of his father's Ghost.

This last soliloquy of Hamlet is the last dramatic necessity for delaying the action of revenge after which everything is hastened to the *catastrophe*. After this we find Laertes returning from France and ready for action against Claudius or Hamlet ; we find how Ophelia dies of drowning, which further hastens the dramatic action ; and finally the fencing-contest between Hamlet and Laertes takes place and brings about the tragic end of all the leading characters except Horatio, who is left behind to explain the whole situation to the audience, and to welcome young Fortinbras as the King of Denmark.

32

Soliloquies of Claudius

There are altogether four soliloquies of Claudius in the play. Three of these soliloquies are quite short, while one of them is quite long. These soliloquies help to bring out inner nature of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Claudius and to explain particular states of his mind at particular dramatic moments, and thus they help the development of the dramatic action of the play. The first soliloquy occurs in the first Scene of the third Act in lines 49-54. Of course, this short soliloquy is treated more or less as an aside : but then, it has the same significance of a regular soliloquy. The words in this soliloquy are based upon the remark of Polonius, who says that the old or elderly people have to be hypocrites sometimes or they have to put on some kind of mask in order to conceal their real nature or characters, that is, they have to smile and yet be villains. Claudius feel the pinch of Polonius's remark because he is guilty at heart, because he has been concealing his real character, his crime of murder, under a garb of friendliness and sweet behaviour. Claudius feels that he is no better than a public prostitute, who conceals her ugliness and deformity by all sorts of artificial decorations just as Claudius has been practising all sorts of cheerful looks and gestures of friendliness. This pinch of conscience on the part of Claudius is undoubtedly a good sign ; but then, Claudius repeatedly feels such pinches of his conscience, repeatedly prepares himself for the commission of further crimes and acts of treachery. So in his case, the words of his soliloquy become meaningless because they do not improve his character in the least.

The second soliloquy of Claudius is the longest and it occurs in the third Scene of the third Act lines 37-72. This is the only soliloquy which clearly reflects the guilty conscience and the repentant soul of Claudius. But then he is not afraid of the punishments here on earth : on the other hand, he is afraid of the penalties he may have to pay in tne other world. He is such an experienced or seasoned villain that he knows that on earth one may commit any number of crimes and yet one may escape from the penalties if one has money enough to bribe the judges. Of course, Claudius is to some extent true. But, then, Claudius does not bother about this world ; he feels nervous about his life in the other world. That is why he wants to pray to God for His pardon. But the question is whether one can be pardoned when he possesses or enjoys the benefits of one's crimes just as Claudius is enjoying not only the kingship but also the widowed queen of his own brother. After having prayed to God, Claudius says that his words fly up while his thoughts remain below, or in other words, in spite of his prayers to God, he does not feel chastened at heart, which means that he is not forgiven by God. When Hamlet finds Claudius he too hesitates to kill him on the very spot because he believes that if man is killed, while he is praying to God, he will go srtaight to heaven and not to hell in spite of all his sins and crimes on earth. This soliloquy, therefore, is very significant from the dramatic point of view because it delays the action of revenge and also helps to bring out the inner nature of Claudius, although Claudius does not seem to change for the better afterwords at all because immediately after this he conspires with

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Resencrantz and Guildenstern to send Hamlet away to England for his execution.

The third soliloquy of Claudius occurs in the third Scene of the fourth Act in lines 1-10. This is also a short soliloquy. It shows Claudius as an incorrigible villain and a treacherous man. Immediately after his so called repentance or prayer to God he plans to send away Hamlet to England for his immediate execution. Claudius, by his words in this soliloquy, shows himself to be a very shrewd and cunning villain because he anticipates the dangerous consequences of Hamlet's madness, or rather, Claudius can see clearly that Hamlet is not mad as Polonius foolishly believes him to be. That is why, in order to save himself from future trouble, he decides to do away with Hamlet altogether. But then he does not dare do with away with Hamlet in Denmark because he knows that Hamlet is loved by most people, and therefore if any injury is done to Hamlet, the people may rise up in arms against him. How significantly and truly Claudius says that foul diseases require sharp remedies, so Hamlet being a dangerous person must be destroyed immediately in order to make the position of Claudius perfectly secure. This soliloquy of Claudius helps to advance the dramatic action and also to complicate it further for hastening the crisis of the play.

The fourth soliloquy of Claudius occurs in the third Scene of the fourth Act in lines 54—64. This soliloquy also is short as the third one or the first one. It reveals merely how much relieved Claudius feels when he has arranged for sending away Hamlet to England for his immediate execution. He feels sure of the execution of Hamlet in England because in his view England is afraid of Denmark because the old King of Denmark, that is Hamlet's father once happened to defeat the English King in the battle-field and thereby proved the superiority of Denmark over England ; and naturally England will not have the courage to disobey the orders of the King of Denmark in executing Hamlet. But then, Shakespeare has said in *Macbeth* that security is mortal's chiefest enemy, and so also security of Claudius proves to be fatal to him because by the irony of fate Hamlet is not executed. He returns home perfectly safe and sound, and finally kills Claudius in the last scene of the play in which Laertes Hamlet, Gertrude, also, of course die.

33

Play within the play in "Hamlet"

It is said by the critics that through the lips of Hamlet Shakespeare has expressed his views on the dramatic art and also has criticised the contemporary theatres of England. We notice particularly in the second Scene of the Third Act how Hamlet speaks out frankly his own ideas about acting, about stage-management, and other necessary things for the production of a play upon the stage. We notice also how Hamlet instructs the travelling players and actually shows them the manner of acting their parts in the play

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

within the play, namely, *The Murder Gonzago*. Mark what Hamlet says to the players with a view to coach them for the 'mousetrap' which Hamlet organises merely to catch the conscience of Claudius. or rather to discover that Claudius is the real murderer of Hamlet's father.

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue, but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say, the whirlwind or passion. You must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but in explicable dumb-shows and noise ; I would have such a fellow whipped for over doing Termagant : out herods Herod ; pray you, avoid it. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you overstep not the modesty of nature ; for nothing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold, as it were, the mirror upto nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of which one must in your allowance overweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian pagan, nor man, have strutted and bellowed that I have thought some nature's journeymen had mad men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them ; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the mean-time, some necessary question of the play be than to be considered ; that is villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.'

Some of the critics have raised the question how could Hamlet know anything of acting or of instructing other players in the art of acting, particularly, when he is himself so slow and tardy in action ? But the critics forget that Hamlet is out and out an actor in the play and nothing else ; and because he is an actor that is why he is a mystery and a riddle to the audience and the reader and to most ot the critics who view Hamlet as a person like any of them. Hamlet is an actor because he has to act in the play sometimes as a lover, sometimes as a satirist and a cynic, sometimes as a priest and a philosopher, and sometimes also as a mad man. When he plays the role of a lover, even Ophelia and Polonius are misled to think that

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

he is mad with love ; and while he is acting as philosopher in his soliloquies, we feel that he is the unfittest person to take any action of revenge upon anybody. Then again, when he is instructing the travelling players for the play within the play, we feel sure that Hamlet is just like any of the actors. When again he plays the role of the lunatic before either Ophelia or Polonius or Claudius, they feel that he is really insane although he is furthest away from insanity. When he talks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern they never suspect for a moment that Hamlet sees their very heart and mind like a mirror and they cannot read even a single thought or emotion of his mind or heart. That is how Hamlet goes on acting throughout the play until at last he melts away from the stage like an everlasting mystery as a good actor should always do.

Some of the critics are perfectly right when they say that Hamlet is no other than Shakespeare himself who acts and speaks like a perfect actor or dramatist to the players of the play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, when he gives so many valuable instructions and also other stage-directions to them. This Hamlet could never do if he were a mere dramatic character like other characters in the play. It is only because he is no other than Shakespeare himself that he appears to be such a perfect actor upon the stage because Shakespeare was a great actor, a great dramatist, and a great stage-manager too. But according to certain other critics, Hamlet is not the selfportrait of Shakespeare. A great artist never reveals himself through his own creation : even a lyrist does not express his own feelings and emotions through his sonnets or lyrics ; and, therefore, a dramatist, who was both a poet and a dramatist, cannot be and should not be identified with any of the characters in any of his plays. But then the question is, can any artist conceal or suppress his thoughts and emotions or detach them altogether from the personalities whom he creates in his poetry or drama or fiction ? It is a very controversial problem, and much can be said on both sides. The Fools in Shakespeare's plays, for example, are taken to be nothing but images of Shakespeare himself because these Fools are not fools in the ordinary sense but they are very great critics, philosophers, observers, priests and moralisers, which ordinary fools can never be unless they are the shadows of the master minds, which bring them into existence. It may not be true that Shakespeare revealed himself in any one particular character as such, but that when we find a unformity of thought, speech, tone and style in several characters created by him, we will not be far wrong if we conclude that in such characters or in many shapes that these characters take, we can detect the voice and tone and soul of Shakespeare. It cannot be that several characters act and think and speak in the same way by mere accident or coincidence. The most objective writer cannot get rid of his own self. He does reveal himself through his creations, though not crudely or directly but really and subtly. And there is nothing unnatural or inartistic in this. The general impression left after reading several

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

works of a writer can be taken to represent the man behind the writer.'

34

Comic Scenes in 'Hamlet'

Every human life is both a comedy and a tragedy, and as Shakespeare always holds the mirror upto nature, his plays also must be mixed with these two main elements of human life. Of course, any play in which the tragic element predominates, is called a tragedy, while a play in which the comic element preponderates, is called a comedy. From that point of view *Hamlet* is undoubtedly a great tragedy. But even in *Hamlet*, we find silver linings of peace and happiness, humour and laughter, sunshine and triumph in some of the scenes of the play. For example, the scene in which Claudius makes his carouse or drinking ceremony, and announces his kingship as well as his marriage with Gertrude, the scene in which Polonius meets his daughter or son to whom he lends so much of moral advice, the scene in which Hamlet talks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and exposes their secret mission, the scene in which the grave-diggers cut jokes with Hamlet and Hamlet also returns the jokes sarcastically and in which the grave-diggers sing songs—all are comic scenes in the sense that there is not touch of horror or terror, of doubt or suspense, of death or destruction of any kind. As a matter of fact, Hamlet's role of madness throughout the play is a comic role which Hamlet plays to perfection before Ophelia, before Claudius, before Polonius and all else, whoever comes in touch with him in order to probe his heart or mind and try to discover the real cause of his pretended or genuine madness.

But then, all these comic scenes are intended to lend some kind or relief to the tragic tension from time to time, otherwise the whole play would be one terrible tragedy just like the tragedies of Marlowe, Thomas Kyd and other Elizabethan dramatists, who delighted in unmixed horrors and terrors enacted upon the stage to entertain particularly the groundlings, who loved nothing but sensations of every sort. Of course, even *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar* can be regarded as tragedies of the type of Marlowe's tragedies in one sense, namely, that at the end we see so many persons dying, being poisoned or killed by some means or other. Some of the critics have said that *Hamlet* is a healthy tragedy. But in what sense ? Probably in the sense that Hamlet duly punishes the wrong-doer, both Claudius and Gertrude by either killing them or getting them killed as he actually gets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern destroyed by their own secret weapons or as by accident he kills Polonius taking him to be Claudius or suspecting that he was overhearing the talk between himself and his mother. Whatever the critics may have to say, we feel that *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are full of deaths or killings which have a tragic effect upon our mind and heart.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

35

Problem of Hamlet's Madness

Hamlet's madness is not real because Hamlet has told us more than once that he has decided to put on 'an antic disposition' just to mislead others and thereby to fulfil his own mission of revenge. He has not only told us this but he also acts in many of the scenes in a perfectly sane manner, particularly, when he talks to Horatio or to his mother or to Laertes whom he does not want to deceive. The persons whom he wants to mislead are Claudius. Polonius, Ophelia, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz and even in the case of the last two persons, he behaves like a sane person and actually exposes their treacherous mission although the two fools do not realise Hamlet's tricks.

Hamlet pretends madness before Claudius because Claudius is the person on whom he has to take his utmost revenge, because Claudius is very shrewd and suspicious, and unless Hamlet misleads him most, he cannot achieve his mission of revenge. Claudius is the only person who suspects that Hamlet is not really mad, and that is why he sets Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and even Ophelia and Gertrude to discover the real cause of Hamlet's madness or whether Hamlet is really mad or not. Hamlet too thinks that Polonius, being the person most in the confidence of Claudius, and Ophelia being the daughter of Polonius must have to be deceived with his feigned madness otherwise not lover and least of all Hamlet, as the lover of Ophelia would like to pretend madness before her. Hamlet pretends madness before Rosencrantz and Guildenstern because they are the spies of Claudius as much as Polonius who have been set upon him. But then, by his assumed madness sometimes, and at other times, by revealing his sanity, Hamlet fools both the spies to the top of their bent, and finally succeeds not only in exposing their treacherous mission but also in getting them executed in his place. Although Gertude is one of the indirect accomplices in the crime of her husband's murder yet she is not as guilty as Claudius and because Hamlet knows that Gertrude is his own mother and also a woman with a weak intellect, he puts off the mask of his assumed madness and talks to her perfectly like a sane person in order to torture her guilty conscience and make her repentant for the sin of her incestuous marriage with the murderer of her husband. Hamlet succeeds to a great extent in making his mother repentant for soiling her widowed bed with the lust of Claudius.

Some of the critics have taken Hamlet as really mad probably because they find that Hamlet has already suffered most by the treacherous murder of his father which alone would drive a loving son mad. Then again, these critics must have considered how Hamlet must have been shocked by the marriage of his mother with the murderer of her husband. The last and greatest shock probably came from Ophelia who had also played false to him, not of her own accord, but under the instigation of her foolish and mean

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

father, Polonius. All these incidents are sufficient to drive any normal person mad. That is why the critics are not very much wrong to fancy that Hamlet is really mad. Then again, Hamlet's behaviour upon the stage before Claudius, Polonius, Ophelia, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz is so strange that any person is likely to take him to be a really mad man.

Hamlet's assumed madness helps a good deal the development or movement of the dramatic action of the play. If Hamlet had not assumed madness, the spying scenes of Polonius or of Claudius or of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz would not have been possible. It is Hamlet's pretended madness that complicates the action and also helps to move it forward for bringing about the *crisis* as well as the *catastrophe* of the play. It is because of his madness that he is sent away from Denmark to England for his execution : it is for his madness that his killing of Polonius gives rise to the return of Laertes and a new conspiracy of Claudius with Laertes in order to kill Hamlet ; and it is due to Hamlet's madness that Ophelia goes off her head and gets drowned in the brook, although most of the critics believe that Ophelia's madness is due to her grief for her father Polonius.

If we study closely and analyse all the soliloquies of Hamlet, we have no reason to think for a moment that Hamlet's madness is real, because a mad person can never moralise over the wickedness and treacheries of the human world ; he can never distinguish between the sins and crimes of this life and the punishments and horrors of the life hereafter ; he can never be so much disgusted with life and be conscious of his disgust ; he cannot be tempted to commit suicide not in fits of madness but in fits of sheer grief, sorrow, disgust and disappointment ; he cannot repeatedly talk of his mission of revenge and feel repentant at heart for the delay in his action ; he cannot organise such a psychological drama for catching the conscience of Claudius or torturing his own mother's guilty conscience with the recollections of her crime or sin of marrying the murderer of her husband.

If Hamlet were really mad, Shakespeare could not have made him the hero of his play : he could not have held him responsible for the tragedy of his life. We know that in Shakespearean plays, and particularly in his tragedies character is destiny, which means that a character, due to some inherent flaw or due to some wrong action, brings about the tragedy of his life and the tragedy of the whole play in which he plays the leading role. If Hamlet had been really mad he would have ceased as a dramatic character because a dramatic character cannot afford to be insane for the reason that he has got to act according to certain dramatic rules which, of course, resemble the roles of normal life and not the random ways of headless creatures, who can act and way they like and who cannot be held responsible for their good or bad actions. A mad man, therefore, in a play becomes a character without any control over himself,

CC-0 Agamigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and as such, he cannot be used as a dramatic character. If character is destiny or if character is to determine the career of a person in a play, he must have perfect control over all his actions ; he must possess all the powers of understanding, judgment and action, otherwise how can he be held responsible for his behaviour and his career or line of action. A mad man cannot be held responsible for his actions because he has no powers of control or understanding as sane persons have, and therefore, no insane person can be a dramatic person in any play, not to speak of Shakespeare's plays.

36

Psychological Importance of the Play within the Play

'*The Murder of Gonzago*' is the play within the play, '*Hamlet*' which is organised and staged by Hamlet with the help of the travelling players in order to catch the conscience of Claudius. Hamlet rightly calls this play the '*mousetrap*' because Claudius, the mouse, in the eyes of Hamlet, has done a great injury to the State of Denmark by murdering the King of Denmark and by marrying his wife and robbing finally his son, Hamlet, of his rights to the throne of Denmark. The critics, however, call this device of the mouse-trap or *The Murder of Gonzago* a pscyho-analytical device because this device helps Hamlet in finding out the secret murder of his father, and exposing him before the public and the court of the State of Denmark.

Psycho-analysis is a kind of psychological experiment by means of which one can get at the very root of a mental disease, such as the sex instinct, the criminal instinct, religious fanaticism, all sorts of fanaticism, all sorts of mental abnormalities, and even dreams, obsessions and complexes. So far as Claudius is concerned, Hamlet makes an experiment upon him with the play within the play in order to find out his criminal instinct and to make him confess or betray unconsciously his crime of murder of the old King of Denmark whose Ghost has already revealed the secrets to his son, Hamlet.

People say that murder can never be concealed however the murderer may try to hide it, because consciously, or unconsciously, in sleep or wakefulness, in unguarded talks or even by instinctive gestures, he often betrays his crime to others. In the present case, Hamlet organises the *Murder of Gonzago*, a similar case of murder, and the crime is committed in the same manner by pouring liquid poison into the ears of the victim as Claudius did while the old King of Denmark was sleeping in the afternoon in his rest-house. When the play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, is actually staged before the eyes of Claudius and Gertrude, both being guilty at heart, cannot bear the scene of the murder of Gonzago, and they make such gestures of unrest in the hall that Hamlet becomes convinced that Claudius is the real murderer and Gertrude is an indirect accomplice because she has agreed to marry the murderer of her husband.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The play within the play is called a psycho-analytical device because it has its psychological reactions upon the guilty observers, because it helps to bring out deep-rooted and concealed crimes committed by Claudius and Gertrude. If we analyse Claudius, we find that he has been suffering from the obsession of fear, the fear of revelation or even suspicion of his crime, and also the fear of being punished for his crime. *The Murder of Gonzago*, particulary the scene of the murder in this play and also the talk between the player king and the player-queen help to bring out the hidden guilty conscience of both Claudius and Gertrude. So, this psycho-analytical device is a kind of relief to the guilty souls as it is also a means of detecting the criminal by the observers including Hamlet, Horatio and others who also attend the performance of the play of murder. It is indeed very striking that in Shakespeare's time Freud's psycho-analysis was completely unknown, but the great artists, poets, and dramatists of ancient Greece and Rome had sufficient knowledge of human psychology, and that is why we should not wonder at this psycho-analytical device which Shakespeare contrives in order to catch the conscience of Claudius and Gertrude.

37

Dramatic Significance of the Scene of Hamlet's Meeting with is Mother

We meet Hamlet and his mother in the fourth Scene of the third Act. The meeting between the son and the mother is arranged by Polonius with the permisson of Claudius in order to draw out Hamlet's mind further and confirm Polonius's conclusion that Hamlet is really mad because of his love for Ophelia, although Claudius has not been convinced at all, because he has the shrewd suspicion that Hamlet is mad only with a purpose, that there is some method in his madness, and that he is not at all mad for love or for anything.

Hamlet is already greatly excited and disturbed in mind because he has found out by the mouse-trap that Claudius is the real murderer of Hamlet's father and that his mother is an indirect accomplice in the crime by her marriage with the murderer of her husband. He has also been convinced that even Ophelia has been playing the decoy to him in getting out secrets from him just as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been employed by Claudius, Hence, Hamlet is most highly strung in his nerves when he meets his mother, and naturally, he should speak daggers to her, forgetting all the love and regards of a son for his mother.

This meeting between Hamlet and Gertrude has great psychological and dramatic importance. Gertrude comes to know, for the first time, that Claudius is the murderer of her husband ; and Hamlet also comes to know that his mother is not a party to his father's murder. This confirms Hamlet, on the one hand, of her innocence, while on the other, it determines him all the more firmly to take revenge upon Claudius. That Gertrude is innocent is evident from

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

her repentance and also from her readiness to be instructed by her son not to pollute her bed any more with the lustful company of her husband's murderer.

The re-appearance of the Ghost in this scene is also dramatically significant, because the Ghost not only reaffirms the innocence of Gertrude by telling Hamlet not to be rude to his mother, but also warns or reminds Hamlet to hasten the action of revenge against Claudius. But Hamlet does not hasten the action of revenge in the least, rather the action is further delayed because of the accidental killing of Polonius which leads to the removal of Hamlet from Denmark by Claudius on the pretext of shielding him from the wrath of the public. But we should not judge Hamlet's delay in the action of revenge from our own point of view. Shakespeare wants to complicate the plot and to bring about the crisis and the *catastrophe* of the play slowly and gradually as he does it in the fifth Act. Besides, Shakespeare's intention is not to make his hero a type of the heroes of Marlowe or Kyd or Ben Jonson or other Elizabethan dramatists who believed in sensational horrors and terrors in order to please the groundings of the audience. Shakespeare's motive or aim is to bring about a psychological revenge upon all the wrong-doers, particularly upon Claudius and Gertrude, who should be killed morally and not physically so that even when Hamlet would die upon the stage the audience may feel that there has been a triumph of the good over the evil.

38

Dramatic Significance of Hamlet's Surrender to Claudius

Some of the critics believe that Hamlet commits a great error of judgment by surrendering himself completely in the hands of his uncle immediately after the accidental murder of Polonius by him. They also think that Hamlet should not have passed his sword through the arrars even if he had suspected that somebody was over-hearing the talk between himself and his mother. These critics feel that Hamlet is not only committing an error but with his own hands sealing up all opportunities of taking revenge upon Claudius. These speculation on the part of the critics are not very unnatural, but then speculations would definitely lower the dignity and also take away much of the credit of intelligence from the hero, who according to Claudius, is loved by most people, and who according to Ophelia, is an ideal man because he is a great courtier, a great soldier, a great scholar.

In our opinion, the accident of killing Polonius is beyond the control of Hamlet. Claudius too is too powerful for Hamlet because he is the King while Hamlet is merely the Prince of Denmark. Hamlet is intelligent enough that the accidental killing of Polonius may rouse up public feeling against him, particularly when the public knows that he is not on good terms with Ophelia because Ophelia has practically jilted him or he has jilted her. It is not that Hamlet is a coward but

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

he is prudent, wise, cautious with a good deal of foresight. That is why he calmly surrenders himself to Claudius.

But there are other graver reasons behind Hamlets surrender to Claudius. Hamlet has purposely concealed the dead body of Polonius, otherwise Claudius would have made a public show of the dead body in order to excite public feelings against Hamlet. Hamlet comes to know that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the spies of Claudius, and they have been asked to take Hamlet away to England to fulfil some evil purpose which, of course, Hamlet does not know in the beginning, but he has a shrewd suspicion that the purpose is not good or pious. Hamlet, therefore, knowingly courts arrest and willingly surrenders himself to Claudius in order to dive deep into his secret motive behind all his confidential communication with his evil agents. He further knows that Claudius is the only man who feels sure that Hamlet is not really mad and that is why Hamlet also wants to play the game of nerves or wits with Claudius. Hamlet's game of ravenge is, therefore, a game of nerves or wits and not a game of horror and bloodshed as most of the actions of revenge in the human world actually imply. Hamlet feels at every step that Claudius is equally shrewd and diplomatic and he is also putting on the mask of hypocrisy or diplomacy just as Hamlet is putting on the mask of lunacy. Both are crafty and both are bent upon outwitting each other. Mark what Hamlet says to his mother with reference to Claudius, after he has explained to her that Claudius has arranged to send him away to England with the two villains, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, for the execution of some sinister purpose.

'Let it work ;
For it is the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar ; and it shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon ; O, it is most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.'

But the question is that Hamlet takes too great a risk by going with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and we know that if they had not fallen into the hands of the sea-pirates, it would have been impossible for Hamlet to escape from the execution immediately on his landing in England. Hamlet, however, is over-confident about his superior intelligence, and that is why he is so sure of hoisting the engineer with his own petard.

The dramatic significance of this surrender of Hamlet to Claudius is that it helps to complete the cup of Claudius's crimes or sins so that his penatly may be hastened or be made most severe in the end. Of course, if we judge Claudius's punishment by his death alone then it will appear that he has not suffered more than Laertes or Hamlet or even Gertrude, who is not completely innocent like Hamlet or Laertes. But then, we should judge the penalty of Claudius by the moral or spiritual standard. In the first instance, Claudius is beaten by Hamlet in the game of wits ; he loses Gertrude

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

after Hamlet's meeting with his mother because Gertrude never allowed Claudius to enjoy her bed ; then again, his conspiracy with Laertes against Hamlet totally fails : on the other hand, the conspiracy involves the lives of Laertes and Gertrude which was never intended last of all, it is Hamlet who kills with his own hand the murderer of his father and finds also Gertrude lying dead with her incestuous partner. All these considerations at the end of the play incline us to believe that Hamlet's surrender to Claudius is not at all meaningless or dramatically insignificant.

39

Relationship Between Hamlet and Ophelia

We do not know why some of the critics have done a grave injustice to both Hamlet and Ophelia by declaring each of them as faithless in love because each of them is a slave to passion or youthful lust. These critics have pointed out that Hamlet being a prince is given to licentiousness, while Ophelia being a woman of a much lower status than that of Hamlet is inclined to tempt Hamlet with any amount of lewdness in order to win him as her husband and to be herself the Queen of Denmark in the long run. Whatever secret ambitions or motives Polonius may have had, and however much he may be trying to set his daughter upon Hamlet either in order to tempt him to marry her or get out some of the real secrets of his madness, yet it would be said in defence of both the daughter and the father that none of them has proved to be faithless except that the daughter has been extremely obedient to her father while the father has been extremely loyal and faithful to his master, Claudius.

Some of the critics have pointed out that the words of Ophelia while she is speaking to Hamlet, betray her insincerity and treachery of love. But in our opinion, this accusation is wrong and unjustified, because whatever Ophelia speaks is prompted and coached by her father. The father has already advised her to be scarce and not cheap to Hamlet so that he may be all the more attracted towards her. He has also warned her that Hamlet being a prince is privileged to indulge in licentiousness ; but if Ophelia indulges in the same sort of freedom and licence, she would earn a bad name and her future will be completely blighted. Now, no father would advise or warn a bad daughter in the manner in which Polonius advises or warns Ophelia, because, a bad daughter is always beyond the control of her parents because she would never listen to their good advice.

If Ophelia were a bad or licentious woman she could not have appreciated all the noble qualities of Hamlet, she could not have uttered the words about Hamlet that he is a great soldier, a great courtier and a great scholar : she would not have been so much shocked when she feels that Hamlet has really gone off his head. But we know that Hamlet is not off his head at all.

A few other critics have branded Hamlet as an inconstant lover and also as a licentious youth because Hamlet had been flirting with

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia all along till before the death of his father or till before his mother married Claudius. Of course, we cannot certify what Hamlet had been doing before or after his father's death but we know this much that Hamlet's love for Ophelia is as much genuine as Ophelia's love for Hamlet. The only secret of the whole relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia is that Hamlet pretends to be mad even before Ophelia because he knows that she has been engaged by Polonius to behave in a particular manner in order to draw out whether Hamlet is really mad or not. Ophelia also pretends that she does not love Hamlet any longer simply because she has been tutored by her father not to be cheap before Hamlet because then Hamlet may think that she is not a woman of good character or because Hamlet may take undue advantage and ruin her reputation as a woman and the prospects of her marriage with anybody else in future.

The whole scene of antic behaviour between Hamlet and Ophelia seems to us a comedy of mid summer madness, and neither Hamlet nor Ophelia really means what he or she speaks to the other. We have ample proof of Ophelia's love for Hamlet in her words which she speaks out within herself about Hamlet in lines 150—160 in the first scene of the third Act, "O, what a noble mind is here overthrown.....O, woe is me to have seen what I have seen, see what I see'. Such words could never come out from the lips of a woman who does not really love her man. On the other hand, mark what Hamlet says in lines 260—263 in the first Scene of the fifth Act, 'I loved Ophelia : forty thousand brothers.....make up my sum'. Such words also can never come from the lips of a man who does not really love his woman.

The strange behaviour of Hamlet and Ophelia to each other is in our opinion a dramatic necessity. If Hamlet had not petended madness or his open disgust with Ophelia, if he had not uttered those irrelevant words before Ophelia, how could Polonius be miguided and how could Claudius also be hoodwinked in order to serve Hamlet's secret purpose for the fulfilment of his revenge ? If Ophelia had not behaved in the manner as she is tutored to behave, Hamlet might have been exposed directly to the wrath of Claudius and there would have been no complications in the plot. It is the pretended madness of Hamlet and also the strange behaviour of Ophelia that are essential for the development of the dramatic action. Of course, Ophelia, unfortunately, does not know that Hamlet is not really mad or that he really loves her in spite of his antic behaviour and his suggestion to her for going to nunnery. Ophelia really goes off her head, not so much on account of her father's death as on account of her disappointment in love with Hamlet. Her madness and her death are both equally necessary for the dramatic action because without these two incidents it would not have been possible for Claudius to poison the mind of Laertes sufficiently against Hamlet, and there would have been no possibility of a fencing contest between Laertes and Hamlet that brings the dramatic action to its tragic end. Hamlet's madness or pretension of his coldness towards

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia is equally necessary for the dramatic action of the play. Had he shown his real love or weakness for Ophelia, he would have been exposed more quickly to Claudius and his action of revenge would have been either further delayed or altogether beffled.

40

Dramatic Significance of the 'Grave diggers' Scene in 'Hamlet'

The 'grave-diggers' scene occupies a portion of the first Scene of the fifth Act, and it hardly takes a little more than 100 lines. So far as the dramatic action of the play is concerned, it is doubtful if it serves any purpose ; but then, it has its due dramatic significance or importance. In all tragedies of Shakespeare there are scenes of comic relief because without them the audience would be overtaxed by the tragic tension. The grave-diggers have been called the clowns probably because they serve the same purpose as the clowns do, namely, to relieve the tragic tension of the play by talking humorously or talking nonsense which, of course, is not pure nonsense but meaningful nonsense.

The grave diggers or clowns in the play, *Hamlet* bring out also a striking contrast between the class of royalty or nobility and the working class and also how the two classes feel, behave and talk. Hamlet represents the nobility of Denmark, while Horatio represents the intellectual scholarly class, while the clowns or the grave diggers represent the poor working class. The clowns or the grave-diggers bring us much closer to reality by digging the grave and throwing the human skulls and talking most indifferently over them as if they are not in the least afraid of death of which all others in the world are so much afraid. The grave-diggers are the unthinking people while Hamlet and Horatio are the most thinking persons, and hence the contrast between them is brought out very sharply in this scene.

There is some dramatic irony about this scene, because the grave-diggers are not in the least aware that they are talking to Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, while they are talking about Hamlet. Hamlet also is not aware that while he is reflecting upon the human skulls in the Churchyard his own skull soon be there. The scene of the grave-diggers is a very striking and significant interlude between several scenes of tragic incidents before and after this scene. The audience has been already overtaxed by the scenes of pretended or real madness of conspiracies and mouse traps, of supernatural appearances and their revelations, of deaths and escapades : and that is why the audience feels mightily relieved when they attend to the jokes and songs of the clowns or grave-diggers. Granville-Barker remarks about the grave-diggers' scene, 'Here, indeed, in this simplicity (of the diggers) is an important element, which has till now been lacking in the play's scheme, and in the various provocations to thought set before Hamlet upon his spiritual journey. But with its (this scene's) addition the gamut will be fairly

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

complete ; in its (the whole play's) range from the players and their fiction to these ultimate facts, mirrored in the digging of a grave and in its harvest of Yorick's skull.'

The songs in this scene have also some amount of dramatic significance because these songs relate to the tragedy of love, which is an indirect reflection on the tragedy of love between Hamlet and Ophelia and also between Gertrude and her former husband, the old King of Denmark, whose love Gertrude has betrayed. As a matter of fact the clowns in this scene are digging or preparing the grave of Ophelia, and therefore, these songs of the clowns seem to have some prophetic significance just as Shakespeare has always been telling us that coming events cast their shadows before. Besides, the songs of the grave-diggers seem to have some mysterious association with the songs of Ophelia which she sings during her madness, pretended or genuine, casting a further gloom on the tragedy of her love.

The grave-diggers' scene is a highly symbolic scene, full of most moving spectacle of laughter and tears that come jostling together. Hamlet has come back from England where he never reached, and the first thing he sees in Denmark is this grave scene. He has returned to his own grave, which is shortly going to be dug for him, and in a sense, he has come back out of his grave, considering that he was sent out of Denmark with royal orders for his prompt execution. And yet in another sense Hamlet has dug his grave, since it is his killing of Polonius, let alone his cutting rejection of Ophelia. which has been the immediate cause of Ophelia's insanity ending in death. So the grave he sees is his own in many respects. And since it is a changed Hamlet that has returned from the voyage, this makes it appropriate that he should meet this grave which is the link between this world and the next. Hamlet's thoughts, never ordinarily worldly, are here by a natural transition and dramatic propriety, fixed upon a grave and all that it implies. It was a stroke of genius which made Shakespeare bring in these clown and the grave, cheeck by jowl, with a royal prince who appreciates the democracy of the grave where.

'Septre and crown tumble down
And in the dust are equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade'

This is the last time that we are going to see Hamlet as a profound philosopher. After this scene he is going to be 'bloody' in more senses than he has ever meant when he went away from Denmark. We see Hamlet here the detached spectator of life, not the brooding, self-centred egotist he has been. He attracts us by his keen wit, his sane wisdom, and his lovable self-forgetfulness, which makes his death all the more poignant and tragic. We feel what a prince is here going to enter the grave, and we cherish his memory all the more for his presence in such a scene.

The clowns with their songs and jests and unsophisticated ways of thinking make us feel the glaring contrast with the falsely glittering

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial Central College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and corrupt court of King Claudius and his sophisticated courtiers. We are presented with a different view of Denmark, always there, of course, but likely to be forgotten by those who only see the flittering pomp and thundering noise of the revels at Elsinore. Here we are reminded that the churchyard and the grave too are present at Elsinore ; and it is a welcome relief to witness these country clowns and their mother wit in contrast to the foul machinations and corrupt morals of the royal court and the aristocracy of Denmark. The open air freshness of the graveyard is in healthy contrast with the hot house atmosphere of the royal palace where most of the action of *Hamlet* is concentrated. It is good that we come out of it and breathe the refreshing weather of the graveyard—is it not another striking idea of this scene which makes us associate health and purity with the grave-yard as against the rotten state of Denmark ?

'The pathos of Ophelia's drowning tragedy is here too deep for tears. It sets off the foul machinations of Claudius in the preceding scene where he plotted with Laertes in order to do away with Hamlet. The pathos is heightened by the irony of Hamlet's ignorance of the situation, since he does not know whose grave it is at which he is so gravely speculating upon life and death.

'This scene offers the contrast in character no less than in action and incident. Hamlet and Laertes are more glaringly contrasted than hitherto. But the contrast is not in favour of Laertes, as some critics would make it out to be. They tell us that here we find Hamlet still brooding, philosophising as ever upon the eternities of life and death, whereas he ought to be proceeding to kill his uncle and his enemies. And against such a Hamlet we are asked to contrast the active, practical, dutiful Laertes, who goes straight to avenge his father's murder. What a travesty of judgment, as if any action is better than no action. No, this is not what Shakespeare means, though he does suggest the contrast. The contrast is in favour of Hamlet. It is Hamlet's nobility and simplicity of character which is really contrasted with the morally spineless character of Laertes. It is Hamlet's generous and open-minded character which is contrasted with the hypocritical, sycophantic and villainous treachery of Laertes, who proposes to kill Hamlet in a mean and cowardly attack with a poisoned dagger. It is the essential heroism of Hamlet which is contrasted with the quint-essential cowardice of Laertes.

41

Hamlet's Egotism

At least two critics of Shakespeare, namely, Steevens and Madariaga, have made the remark that Hamlet is a self-centred or egotistic soul, and that is why he does not actually obey the Ghost of his father but follows his own impulse for taking revenge upon Claudius. If we have to justify the above statement, we have to find out and also prove that throughout the play Hamlet thinks

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of himself, follows his own instinct or impulse, and does not think of others or obey or follow the advice or dictates of any body else. Of course, Hamlet is a very thoughtful person ; but he is not at all impulsive. A man who indulges in so many soliloquies can never be impulsive ; on the contrary, he is most calculating, hesitating, and even slow and dilatory in action simply because he is most thoughtful by nature, most philosophic by temperament and also equally suspicious and cautious at every step of his action. This does not, however, mean that he is self-centred or egotistic. An egotist is one who is not only self-centred but also selfish, and such a person cannot think of any other interest except his own. But in our opinion, Hamlet is quite the opposite of an egotist.

If Hamlet were an egotist, he would not have advised Ophelia to go to a nunnery, particulary when he had taken a fancy to her and also when she had responded to his invitations of love or lust ; he would not have surrendered himself so completely at the hands of Claudius knowing full well that Claudius is his sworn enemy ; he would not have regarded, at least for some time in the beginning, either Rosencrantz or Guildenstern as his friends ; he would not have said to the Ghost that he would wipe out from the tablet of his mind all other thoughts except the thought of revenge ; he would not have cautioned or advised his mother not to allow Claudius to make any more lustful approaches to her, not to defile the bedlof her former husband with the company of his murderer : he wou d not have regretted so sincerely the accidental killing of Polonius with his sword : he would not have allowed himself to be conveyed to England by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ; he would not have shaken hands with Laertes even after a great scuffle with him ; he would not have jumped into the grave of Ophelia challenging his love for her and saying loudly that even twenty thousand brothers could not love Ophelia so much as he loved her ; he would not have spared the life of Claudius when he got the opportunity of killing Claudius just on the very spot while he was enaged in prayers ; he would not have killed Claudius when he found Gertrude being poisoned with a drink or when Laertes had disclosed the conspiracy of Claudius against him till the very last moment of his life.

All the above argument we have given above have been misused by the two critics, Steevans and Madariaga, against Hamlet who is generous, self sacrificing, open to caution and sane advice. If Hamlet is egotistic in any sense, it may be in his speculative nature, in his philosophic outlook, in his cautions spirit, in his unbending attitude, in his self-confidence, and also in his faith in the higher principles of life which are far beyond the conception of an egotist. If Hamlet were really an egotist he could not have been such a great friend to Horatio as well as to the grave-diggers, being himself particularly the heir-apparent to the throne of Denmark. If we call Hamlet an egotist we would be pulling him down from the high pedestal wherefrom he commands all the attributes of a great scholar a great soldier, a great courtier, a great philanthrope, a great philoso-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

pher, a great worshipper of moral and spiritual values which none of the characters in the play can claim to possess in such a degree or in such a number.

42

The problem of character and Destiny in 'Hamlet'

In a Shakespearean tragedy the hero is an outstanding personality, possessing many rare qualities which none of the other characters in the play possess. He is a man of exalted position, possessing great courage, self-sacrificing spirit, a good deal of intelligence and such other virtues. But then, he possesses also a great flaw or defect which is not necessarily a vice but which mars all other good qualities in him, particularly when he is placed in certain situations or circumstances, which require some quality which is just the opposite of that flaw and which, therefore, leads him to a tragedy. Had the hero been placed in other circumstances with the same flaw he would not have had to suffer or face any kind of tragedy. This is how the peculiar flaw of character as well as the peculiar circumstances bring about the tragedy of the hero in the Shakespearean plays. Some of the Shakespearean scholars and critics have tried to interpret this peculiar situation or circumstance as Fate over which there is no human control and which, therefore, often brings about tragedies in human life as in Shakespearean plays. But then, Shakespeare never allowed any Fate to come into the picture, he simply placed his hero in some situation with some defect or flaw of character which made him commit error of judgement and action, which is the real cause of tragedy in the play.

If we analyse some of the heroes of the Shakespearean tragedies we find various kinds of peculiarities of character, which stand palamount over other qualities or characteristics. For example, in King Lear, we find that the greatest defect in his character is his stupidity which he follows in old age, and due to this stupidity, he distributes all his property to his daughters and afterwards gets himself kicked out from his own palace. The two elder daughters, Goneril and Regan, take an undue advantage of the helplessness of King Lear and make him more helpless by refusing food and shelter, love and everything else to him. That is how the tragedy of his life is brought about by his dotage or stupidity of old age.

In the case of Macbeth, he possesses a vaulting ambition but this ambition could not have its scope for fulfilment if he had not been encountered and instigated by the equivocations of the witches or had not Lady Macbeth also been equally ambitious like her husband or had not Duncan visited Macbeth's castle and been his guest and offered a golden opportunity to fulfil his vaulting ambition by murdering him in sleep. Of course, in the case of Macbeth, this vaulting ambition is a vice as in all other persons ; but then, had Macbeth been placed in other circumstances, his vaulting ambition would have died-in his breast without being put so action. Therefore, it is not merely his ambition, which is the flaw in his character,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

but also the peculiar circumstances of the King's visit to his castle and also his encounter with the witches that are really responsible for the tragedy of Macbeth.

The real flaw in Othello's character is his credulous nature, which makes him suspicious, and his credulity and suspicions are further fanned by the villainy of Iago. So, Othello's credulity and Iago's villainy are the real cause of the tragedy of Othello. It is Iago who forms the peculiar circumstance or who creates the situation for Othello to be the victim of credulity and suspicion and thereby wrecks the peace and happiness of his life by strangling to death his innocent Desdemona.

In Julius Caesar we find the great flaw of imperialism or haughtiness, which creates enmity in persons like Brutus and other senators ; but then, had there been no jealous and evil-minded person like Cassius, Brutus could not have been mis-guided and Caesar would not have been murdered, and consequently, there would have been no tragedy in the play.

In the case of Hamlet we find in him one flaw-his thoughtful, philosophic and speculative nature, which makes him slow and cautious and calculating in all his actions. This slowness or delay in action is the real cause of the tragedy in his life. Of course, side by side, Claudius, who is an incarnation of lust and greed for power, creates the peculiar circumstances such as the murder of Hamlet's father and the seduction of Hamlet's mother for the fulfilment of both the weaknesses. That is how the tragedy of Hamlet is brought about. Had there been no Claudius and had not Hamlet been a man of speculative nature, no misfortune, no suffering could have come to him.

Shakespeare in his great tragedies creates peculiar characters and also special circumstances which slowly lead up to the tragedy. *In Hamlet* there is the Ghost which also serves as the peculiar circumstance to lead Hamlet, the hero, to the fulfilment of revenge, which, however, is not the real flaw in Hamlet's character. His trait for his love for his father and mother, his love of the virtues of fidelity, constancy and loyalty, all of which are turned into disqualifications by the idealistic spirit of Hamlet, who cries against all womanly virtues, all womanly love and all womanly fidelity and constancy. We notice how Hamlet says that frailty is the name of woman, and that is why he hates his mother as well as Ophelia while they are alive but after their death they are purified in his eyes ; but then, the tragedy is complete in the grave of both Gertrude and Ophelia as it is also complete in the grave of himself and of Laertes and Claudius, the main victim of Hamlet's revenge.

In Shakespearean tragedy, characters is destiny in the sense that character is responsible for all the misfortunes or calamities that follow and ruin the life and career of the hero in the play. But then, it does not mean that character is the sole factor in shaping

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the destiny of the hero : circumstances or situations also are contributory factors just as they happen in actual life in which not merely the defects of human nature but also something of the environments, circumstances and situations, over which there is no human control, are also partly responsible for bringing about calamities to the hero as well as to others in the play. Character may be the main factor because human character is supposed to have free will which guides his actions and shapes his destiny ; but otherwise the circumstances and situations in the physical or material world are powerful enough to change the destiny of man. For example, in actual life, sometimes the son of a poor man may turn out to be a great political leader or a great scientist or a great writer, or just as the son of a millionaire or a great ruler or a great politician may be a begger or a criminal or a fallen creature in morals and other respects, so nodody can say that circumstances alone shape the destiny of man or that character alone builds his career.

But, according to Greek conception, man is a mere puppet in the hands of his circumstances, and as such his virtues or vices, his defects or merits of character have nothing to do with his success or failure, or with his fortune or misfortune in life. This is, of course, an extreme view which is not at all true because we find in actual life that human will and environments both shape the destiny of man. Shakespeare who always held the mirror up to nature must have taken into consideration the influence of circumstances as much as the tendencies of human nature while driving his characters to a happy or an unhappy end. The supernatural element in Shakespeare's tragedies is a potent influence that goes to make up the element of fatality in the life and career of the hero as we find in *Hamlet*. The Ghost is one of the greatest influences that drive or instigate Hamlet to his revenge or in *Macbeth* it is the witches that provoke the ambition of Macbeth and drive him to his tragic end by their equivocations which tempt men with honest trifles and betray them in the deepest consequence.

43
Inconsistencies in 'Hamlet'

There are many seeming and real inconsistencies in the play *Hamlet* ; but some of them can be overlooked because such inconsistencies do occur also in actual life in the medley of circumstances and situations and also in most of the works of art, which are but imperfect copies of nature, although every great artist like shakespeare tries to hold the mirror upto nature and have the most accurate reflection of nature in his own piece of art.

In the first instance, if Hamlet's madness is assumed, how is it that it escapes the notice of every body, and even of Claudius, who is no less shrewd than Hamlet ? Guildenstern and Rosencrantz who are employed as spies upon Hamlet, and as such, who should be sufficiently shrewd, are being easily befooled, particularly in the scene

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

where they come to probe the real cause of Hamlet's madness but go back on being told by Hamlet that he had found out what kind of person they were. It is also strange but not absolutely unusual that Horatio does not meet Claudius in any of the scenes, while every character in the play meets every other character at least once. It is also equally strange that Gertrude, being the mother of Hamlet, cannot find out whether he is really mad or not. A mother knows best her own son as a wife knows best her husband ; but Gertrude fails to know anything about the mind or the heart of her own son, Hamlet. Another unusual thing is that the Ghost is not seen by Gertrude although it is seen even by the soldiers Hamlet and Horatio whenever it happens to appear. There cannot be any reason for the invisibility of the Ghost before Gertrude particularly when we know that she has done a great injustice to her husband by marrying the murderer of her husband. But against this seeming inconsistency we can say that Gertrude is probably not guilty at all, and that is why the Ghost remains invisible to her, as we find in *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* that the Ghost appears only to the guilty souls. But then, why does the Ghost appear to Hamlet or to Horatio or even to the soldiers ? Are they all guilty ? So, this appearance of the Ghost by preference to certain persons seems to be rather striking and inconsistent.

John Bailey, one of the critics of Shakespeare, while pointing out the inconsistencies in *Hamlet* remarks : This all-compelling story has many defects and inconsistencies from the uncertainty about the character of the chief factor. Take for instance, the character of Fortinbras. The play ends, as all Shakespeare's tragedies end on the note of peace and with a leaving of the disordered world in the hands of plain and simple men who have played no great part in the story. This was partly, no doubt, for technical reasons ; there was no curtain then, and dead bodies had to be got off somehow and by somebody. But it is more than that. There is always at the end, as Mr. Barker has said, 'a turning to the living future', and I should add more still, a desire for peace and calm and hope at the last. So Octavius speaks the last word of *Julius Caesar*, *Malcolm* of *Macbeth*, Albany of *Lear*. And hereafter everybody else is dead, and the kingdom and its future are left to Fortinbras. But if we look back at the first Scene of the first Act, we shall find it very surprising that the 'young Fortinbras' as described there should be contentedly accepted as ruler of Denmark. Then, how strange it is that the Ghost comes from Purgatory to talk to Hamlet, and yet when Hamlet speaks of what happens after death, he seems to have no thought of Purgatory at all. How strange that, where all the action takes place in Denmark and all the characters are Danes, they should continually speak of Denmark as if they were outside of it, and use the word Dane apparently as a term of reproach, as when the Queen says, 'O' this is counter, you false Danish dogs', and when Hamlet at the end addresses the king as 'thou incestuous murderous damned Dane'. How strange that Hamlet in the first Act should hardly know by

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

sight his apparently old and intimate friend, Horatio ; that he is, 'at school' in Act I and aged thirty in Act V ; that in the grava-scene Horatio should apparently know little of Laertes, the brother of Ophelia and the son of the Court Chamberlain. There are instances everywhere of Shakespeare's indifference to consistency, but none anywhere odder than these, which are only specimens of many to be found in *Hamlet*. It is also curious, though not an inconsistency, that he should put the great saying—perhaps his greatest about kingship, 'There is such divinity doth hedge a king', into the mouth of Claudius, almost the worst of all his bad kings. Yet these technical faults are little noticed either in the theatre or in the closet, and they hardly detract at all from our delight and wonder at the poetry, greatness and truth of his extraordinary drama. In it, as in all the greatest creations of art, it is hard to say whether it is its naturalness or its poetry, it rendering of truth as well as see it, or its revealing of things in that truth which few see, its immanence, we may say, or its transcendence which is its supreme quality. In fact, the two are inextricably mixed. We are at home in it : we are in the world we live in every day. But we are also all the while in a world strangely greater, strangely more wonderful and more beautiful than that of our experience.'

44

'Hamlet'—an Intellectual Drama

Hamlet is an intellectual drama in the sense that the character of Hamlet is highly intellectual and the texture of the play is also woven with the intellectual fibres of a few characters such as Hamlet, Claudius and Horatio. The play can also be regarded as a battle of wits or of intellects contraposed, or a cold war strung upon the minds of the leading characters in the play. Hamlet is highly intellectual because he is highly speculative, imaginative and philosophic. His soliloquies and his talks with Horatio and Gertrude reflect the high intellectual level of the talker. That Hamlet's intellect is much sharper than that of any other leading character in the play is proved by his feigned madness which he puts off and puts on conveniently to himself whenever the occasion demands such a change. From the beginning to the end of the drama, both Claudius and Hamlet have a regular battle of wits. We notice how Hamlet from the beginning pretends madness only to deceive Claudius, how he contrives the play within the play in order to catch the conscience of the King, how by his superior intellect he outwits Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, how he manages to escape from the hands of the sea-pirates and at the same time arrange for the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in England by the exercise of the same superior intelligence which Hamlet possesses over everybody else. Throughout the play Hamlet is playing a game of intellect with Claudius, Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and even with Ophelia, and in the game, he beats them all, although sometimes he

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

is beaten by circumstances which are always more powerful than man or his intellect.

Other tragedies of Shakespeare such as *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear* are also more or less intellectual. In *Julius Caesar* we find that Brutus is won over only by intellectual arguments of Cassius, who wins for putting an end to Caesar's haughtiness and imperialism by getting him murdered. There is much of similarity between Brutus and Hamlet because of their philosophic and idealistic temperament, although Brutus is more a man of action than Hamlet, who is far more speculative than Brutus, because Brutus does not indulge in soliloquies as Hamlet does. King Lear also develops the same kind of talking to himself as Macbeth or Hamlet develops but Lear does not indulge in soliloquies like Macbeth or Hamlet, and therefore, King Lear must be far less intellectual than the other two. *Othello* is a play of devilish intrigue against innocence, simplicity' and credulity, and therefore, it is also an intellectal game, although it is a one-sided game. *Hamlet* is also a play of intrigue because we find from the beginning to the end that Claudius is intriguing against Hamlet with either Polonius or Rosencrantz and Guildenstern or Polonius or Laertes. Hamlet outwits Claudius only on two occasions, namely in the play within the play in which Hamlet actually catches the conscience of Claudius, and on the other occasion when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are exposed and also finally executed by the tricks of Hamlet. So far as Polonius is concerned, he tries to outwit Hamlet by spying upon him twice but he is killed behind the arras when he goes to spy upon Gertrude and Hamlet. Claudius tries to outwit Hamlet by misleading and tempting him to fight a fencing contest against Hamlet with a poisoned sword and also by arranging a poisoned drink, both of which unfortunately recoil upon Gertrude, Laertes and himself in the long run, although Hamlet also dies of the poisoned cut from Laertes's sword. But Claudius is finally defeated by Hamlet in his battle of intellect.

So after having analysed most of the tragedies of Shakespeare we find that they are all more or less intellectual dramas but *Hamlet* is the most intellectual drama in the whole lot, and that is why this play and its hero have given so much trouble to the reader and the critic in understanding the play or in analysing the hero correctly.

45

'Hamlet' as an Artistic Failure

T. S. Eliot has been misled by his study of Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and his *Hamlet* which is based on the Tale of Belleforest, and that is why he believes that the motive of the earlier versions of the story of Hamlet was revenge while in the play of Shakespeare the motive is not so much revenge as the guilt of inces tuous marriage of Hamlet's mother with licentious Claudius. Eliot has based his conclusions and also his arguments on the observations

CC-0. Panjab University Chandigarh. Digitized by eGangotri

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of Mr. Robertson, and that is why he says that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* so far as it is Shakespeare's is a play dealing with the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son and that Shakespeare was unable to impose this motive successfully upon the intractable material of the old play.

In our opinion, Eliot probably did not study Kyd's *Hamlet*, and therefore, if he says that the motive in Kyd's play is one of revenge only, while in Shakespeare's play the motive is one of mother's guilt, his conclusions are based entirely on guess work. Besides, his conjecture that Shakespeare or Chapman has copied some of the verses of Kyd's *Hamlet* is equally fantastic. We do not agree either with Robertson or with Eliot, who is misguided by Robertson's views. In our opinion, the motive of the tragedy in *Hamlet* is not the motive of mother's guilt but the motive of revenge against Claudius, the murderer of Hamlet's father. Of course, it may be true that when the Ghost has revealed the murderer to Hamlet, the marriage of his mother with the murderer of her husband should be sufficiently shocking : but then, Hamlet has no evidence that his mother, of her own accord married Claudius or that she knew, in the least, that Claudius was the murderer of her husband. Then again, in the eyes of the modern reader, the marriage of a widow with her own brother-in-law is not so revolting as it was to Hamlet, who belongs to a much earlier century than the modern reader. Mark what Schucking says in this connection. 'Still more striking is Hamlet's prejudice against his mother. It is true that the modern reader runs the risk of misinterpreting Gertrude's character owing to the change that has taken place in the conception of morality. We cannot now regard to the Queen's marriage with her brother-in-law as incestuous, and as a crime it appeared in those days. It must not, therefore, be forgotten that Hamlet's view was fundamentally different from ours. Furthermore, the overhasty remarriage of a woman, who has wept many tears for a most loving husband, was bound to upset a son devoted to his father. But is Hamlet right in assuming that Queen Gertrude had fallen a prey to lust and had become a victim of her lowest instincts ? His attitute in this is evidently influenced by the melancholic cynical views of women ; for what we know of the Queen's personality hardly corresponds with Hamlet's conviction.

According to Robertson and Eliot, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* deals with the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son : and therefore, mother's guilt is the main motive of the play. According to Eliot and Robertson, Gertrude is guilty, and therefore, she should be punished much more than Claudius at least from the moral point of view. But then, the Ghost certifies sufficiently that Gertrude is comparatively innocent, while Claudius is mainly guilty ; it also warns Hamlet not to be harsh or rude or unkind in any way to his mother because she is a weak creature by nature, and besides, if she is guilty in any way, the pinches of her conscience should be regarded

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

as her sufficient punishment. Mark what the Ghost says to Hamlet regarding the seeming-innocence of Gertrude and the real guilt of Claudius :

"Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast.
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen."

In the very beginning, when the Ghost appears, it warns Hamlet against all possible prejudices against his mother and instructs him to allow his mother to repent in her heart of hearts, if she is guilty at all, and then, let her be judged by God in the other world. Mark what the Ghost says to Hamlet :

"But, however thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught ; leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and string her."

If Shakespeare wanted to make the motive of Gertrude's guilt as the main motive of the play, the Ghost would have never asked Hamlet to be kind to his mother instead of being cruel to her. When Gertrude feels most tortured by the rebukes of her son, mark how the Ghost appears and speak to Hamlet only to admonish him for his unkind words to her.

"But, look, amazement on thy mother sits ;
O, step between her and her fighting soul ;
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works ;
Speak to her, Hamlet."

If Gertrude's guilt were the real motive of the play, Hamlet would have never said to himself with regard to his mother just before going to meet her, 'I will speak daggers to her but use none.'

We have already noticed or pointed out that the Ghost insists on the punishment of Claudius but not of Gertrude anywhere in the play. This altogether removes the idea from our mind that mother's guilt was ever the motive of the play. Eliot further says that Hamlet's delay in the action of revenge is another proof of his mother's guilt being the main motive of the play. But then, is Hamlet really slow in action ? If we study closely Hamlet's soliloquies, we feel that Hamlet is constantly aware of his duty to his departed father and also of the sacred task of revenge upon the murderer of his father ; but then, the soliloquies make Hamlet dilatory also because of the reflective cast of his thought, which

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

actually shows down action. Dover Wilson also seems to acknowledge mother's guilt as one of the motives of the play but not a major motive as Eliot and Robertson have taken it to be. Mark what Dover Wilson says in this connection, 'Hamlet was thought of as the rightful heir to the throne, who had been robbed of his inheritance by an uncle, whom he himself describes as a cut-purse of the empire. But then, Hamlet, according to Dover Wilson, suffers far more by the incestuous marriage of his mother with Claudius than by the murder of his father. And yet we should say that the motive of revenge, and not the motive of mother's guilt, is the major and real motive of the play. Therefore, Eliot's inference that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure is totally wrong.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

1. HAMLET

Hamlet's character is both simple and complex. If we judge him by human standards he is actually very simple ; but if we judge him by the standard of the dramatic art, he appears to be very complex, because every one of us has got a different standard of the dramatic art ; and besides, we do not know the mind of Shakespeare with what motive or aim exactly he built up the character of Hamlet. We know this much only that Shakespeare has made him the hero of a great tragedy ; and on that account Hamlet should possess many good qualities and also certain great defects of character, which every natural man is expected to possess ; but under the plastic pressure of art Hamlet has assumed different facets in the eyes of different observers and critics.

Undoubtedly, Hamlet is a young man of plain dealing and honesty. He is also a man of generous nature, a loving heart, a character that is faithful to filial ties ; and that is why he feels so rudely shocked when the Ghost reveals to him that his father has been treacherously murdered by Claudius, and also feels equally disgusted with the whole race of womanhood when he comes to know that his mother has married the murderer of her husband. Even Claudius, the greatest enemy of Hamlet, pays Hamlet the compliment that Hamlet is most generous and free from all contriving ; and because of this particular quality Hamlet is such a popular personality in the State of Denmark that Claudius dares not touch him in any way even when Hamlet happens to kill Polonius, the King's Court Chamberlain. Hamlet has an inborn love of truth and goodness, and that is why Ophelia regards him as the observed of all observers, the glass of fashion and the mould of form. Even Horatio, who is not blind in any way like a love-mad woman, pays the same compliments to Hamlet. Hamlet, in the eyes of both Ophelia and Horatio, is a scholar, a thinker, a soldier, a courtier and a philosopher.

Hamlet is a highly intellectual being ; and that is why he does not feel at home in Denmark, he wants to go back to his University of Wittenberg, where he was formerly educated with Horatio and others. Masefield describes the atmosphere of the Danish court as most unintellectual in which Hamlet should really feel himself as a misfit, and therefore, ill at ease. It is a society governed by the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS 2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

enemies of intellect, by the sensual and the worldly, by deadly sinners, and the philosophers of bread and cheese. The King is a drunken, incestuous murderer, who fears intellect : Polonius is a councillor who suspects intellect ; the Queen is a false woman who cannot understand intellect : Ophelia is a doll without intellect ; Laertes is a boor who destroys intellect ; the courtiers are parasites who flourish on the decay of intellect.'

A highly intellectual man like Hamlet is bound to think and speculate and philosophise and also to make generalisation at every step. For example, when the Ghost reveals the secrets of the murder of Hamlet' s father, he at once says to himself,

"Ye, from the table of my memory
I will wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there"

and generalises, "My tables, meet it is that I put it down ;
That a man may smile and smile and yet by a villain."

When he finds that his mother has married the incestuous murderer of her husband, he at once generalises and brands the whole race of womanhood,

"Frailty, thy name is woman."

Such a highly intellectual person cannot but indulge in soliloquies, particularly, when he is wanted to act ; it is but natural that the mind of such a person is bound to go off its hinge when he finds both men and women so much fallen and degraded, so treacherous, so full of wickedness. That is why some of the critics have honestly taken Hamlet going off his head sometimes when he is shocked at his uncle's treachery and his mother's incestuous marriage.

Professor Dowden has correctly pointed out that Hamlet is not only highly intellectual but he is highly emotional too. If Hamlet were not highly emotional, he would not have been so rudely shocked at the behaviour of Claudius or of Gertrude. Hamlet's emotionalism has its root in his keen sensibilities, and as such, it affects his body and mind equally. Neither Claudius nor Gertrude understands Hamlet simply because none of them possesses any head or heart in the true sense of the terms or in the same measure as Hamlet possesses them. As a matter of fact, Hamlet's emotion is in conflict with his intellect or reason, and that is why he cannot decide quickly any line of action : that is why he has the tendency to speculate, to philosophise, to generalise, to hesitate and waver at every step and in every situation. Hamlet's malady, his tragedy is chiefly due to this conflict between emotion and intellect. His mother's guilt or his uncle's treachery would not have moved him so deeply, and he would not have tortured his own mother with such unkind words had he not been highly sensitive in his head and heart. It is not a crime to be emotional but if emotions are allowed to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

overwhelm the intellect as Hamlet sometimes allows them to do, the natural result is inaction, delay in action, speculation, and soliloquly or thinking too much within oneself almost like a mad man. It is due to his excessive emotions that Hamlet sometimes rises to fits of a high pitch of excitement, hope and enthusiasm, while at other times, he sinks into great depths of mental depression. These occasional fits have misled some readers to think that Hamlet is mad at certain moments, while he has his lucid intervals at certain other moments.

Hamlet, as least in Shakespeare's play, seems to be a man of a high moral standard. He loves truth and beauty. He believes in both the and and the means being equally good ; and that is why he hates with all his heart all kinds of treachery, infidelity, duplicity, hypocrisy and foul play which Claudius, Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern try to play upon him. Professor Dowden has pointed out to us that had Hamlet been unscrupulous like Claudius, he would have engaged some professional assassins in order to get rid of Claudius ; but then, Hamlet ! does not kill Claudius even when the latter is praying or feeling repentant over his guilt. Our readers may question why then Hamlet gets Rosencrantz and Guilden stern executed by some underhand trick. The answer is that Hamlet believes in being foul to the foul, in returning tit for tat. That is also a kind of honesty which the strictly honest souls generally are found to practise. Hamlet does not rash to kill Claudius because he wants to satisfy his conscience first and verify the truth of the revelations made by the Ghost.

Such a-man as Hamlet is bound to feel that the world is out of joint because he finds that Claudius is licentious and treacherous, that Ophelia, because she plays the role of a decoy under the instigation of her father, that Polonius, who always quotes great maxims of moral conduct, does not follow them at all in his own life, that Laertes also is no better than his father, or that Hamlet's old school-fellows Rosencrantz and Guildenstern allow themselves to be employed as spies on Hamlet on the temptation of some preferments. It is only Horatio who fulfils the high moral standard of Hamlet and that is why he remains a permanent friend to Hamlet till the end of the play.

Hamlet is an extremely conscientious man, and that is why he judges persons by their inner nature and motives, and not merely by their outward behaviour or actions ; and that is why he takes much time in acting upon anything, which unfortunately has been misunderstood by many of the critics as inaction or lack of impulse for action. If he finds a person thinking or speaking one way and then acting another way, he begins to hate such a person, as he hates Polonius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for their inconsistency between their motive and their action. Mark how he says to his own mother when he finds her pure at heart and impure in the bodily desires, 'O, throw away the worser part of it, and live the pure with the other half.' Notice also how Hamlet advises his

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

mother to give up her lustful habit by denying herself the bed with Claudius for one night, and then another night, and then altogether. That is how a vice is conquered by the repetition of a virtue. Hamlet goes distracted simply because he finds the world round about him intellectually backward, morally depraved, and emotionally bankrupt.

Some of the critics have wrongly said that Hamlet not only lacks the impulse for action but also determination or a strong will. Nobody else in the play possesses so much of a strong will as Hamlet ; cut then because Hamlet always thinks thrice before exercising his will, he appears in the eyes of the thoughtless and rash observer as slow, wavering, inactive, and even without any will power. In this respect, he is much superior to Fortinbras and Leartes, who have been declared as men of action, though thoughtless action, which often leads to disaster, is not at all commendable. We see how Laertes, being rash in his action, falls an easy prey to the misguidance of Claudius and unknowingly fights a fencing duel with Hamlet with the treacherous intention of killing him ; but Laertes is duly punished for his rashness because he is stabbed by Hamlet with the same poisoned sword with which he stabs Hamlet. It is a strange irony of Fate or justice or retribution that Laertes and Hamlet during the fencing bout should suddenly exchange their weapons.

If Hamlet were not a man of action and fruitful action, how could he contrive the play within the play, which he calls 'the mouse-trap', and catch the conscience of Claudius with the ingenious trap ? And how again could he turn the tables and get Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed by forging a new commission to the King of England from the King of Denmark ?

But how is it that Hamlet, being so highly iatellectual, so honest and sincere, so ready-minded, and also cautious and wise, brings about a tragedy to his own life as well as to some of the persons, who should not suffer so much as they do in the play ? The reason is that Hamlet is placed in such situations as require certain qualities which Hamlet unfortunately does not possess. But what are those qualities ? We know that Hamlet is surrounded by enemies and by very few friends. Even his own mother is a consort of the murderer of his father. Then again, his own school-fellows—Rosencrantz and Guildenstern turn out to be the spies of Claudius. Last of all, Ophelia, whom Hamlet loves much more than twenty thousand brothers could love, allows herself to be used as a decoy by her father against Hamlet. In such a world of enemies and foul atmosphere, it is almost impossible for a man like Hamlet to prosper or even to exist. To add to his defeat or tragedy of life, Hamlet is most emotional and highly intellectual due to which he is sometimes swept by emotions to unusual fits of passion, while at other times he is drawn into unknown depths of sorrow, depression and inaction. This conflict between Hamlet's real nature and the surrounding world is the real cause of the tragedy of his life.

CC-0. Panjab Digital Library Collection. Digitized by eGangotri Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet appears sometimes to be a cynic and a sceptic. A man who is highly conscientious and honest and who is also highly emotional, is bound to be a cynic when he finds that everything is badly rotten in the State of Denmrak. How can he love Ophelia when he finds his own mother at an advanced age so lustful that she has to fall a prey to licentious Claudius and to agree to marry him, forgetting her godly husband ? How can he love mankind or womankind when he finds a brother treacherously murdering his own brother and a wife marrying the murderer of her own husband, or when he finds his old school-fellows helping his greatest enemy against his very life and welfare ? Hamlet doubts the veracity of the revelations of the Ghost because he believes that the Ghost may be an evil spirit designing to tempt him to his ruin, as he is actually led on to his death at the end of the play. Hamlet becomes a sceptic because he finds everybody going the wrong way, everybody betraying the trust of everybody else, everybody trying to put on the mask of hypocrisy and duplicity. In the whole play he cannot trust anybody except Horatio, and naturally why should he not doubt his own judgment and the rightness of his own action ? Hamlet becomes what he is really not simply because of the circumstances and the environment, which must be sickening to his heart as well as to his mind. What Ophelia says of Hamlet, suspecting him to be a mad man, might have been true when Hamlet was much younger and when he was a student at the University of Wittenberg : but after what he has heard and seen, what he has actually experienced in his own short life-time at Elsinore, he cannot remain the same Hamlet. Mark how Ophelia mourns the change in Hamlet :—

> 'O, what a noble mind is here overthrown,
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,
> The expectancy and rose of the fair state.
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> The observed of all observers, quite down'.

Some of the critics have pointed out that Hamlet is a modern character which Shakespeare has built up by endowing him with all the qualities of imagination, reason and emotion. George Brandes, for example, says about the modernity of the character of Hamlet, 'In *Hamlet*, the first philosophical drama of the modern era, we meet for the first time the typical modern character, with its intense feeling of the strife between the ideal and the actual, with its keen sense of the division between the power and aspiration and with that complexity of nature which shows itself in wit without mirth, cruelty combined with sensitiveness, frenzied impatience at war with invete rate procrastination.'

Many stupid questions have been raised by many critics regarding Hamlet's character as a man and also as a character in the play. For example, is Hamlet really mad or not ? Does Hamlet really love Ophelia or not ? Is he more shocked by his father's death or by

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

his mother's marriage with Claudius ? Is Hamlet an egotist or an altruist ? Is he without the will to act ? Why does he adopt a foul means in order to destroy Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, his old school-fellows, if he is really a conscientious man ? Why does he not kill Claudius on the spot when the latter is engaged in prayers ? Is Hamlet an idealist or a materialist ? Many more questions have been raised and they have been answered in the wrong way by the critics who have raised them. Let us answer some of these questions once for all to settle the doubts in the minds of our readers. Hamlet is definitely not really mad at all. He positively loves Ophelia. He is shocked equally by his father's murder and his mother's marriage with Claudius. Hamlet is both an egotist and an altruist just like every normal person. He has definitely a strong will-power, otherwise he could not perform so many things in the play. He pays back Guildenstern and Rosencrantz in their own coin, and he is perfectly justified in his action. He does not kill Claudius on the spot while the latter is engaged in prayers because he has been told by his father's Ghost that Claudius had killed the king in the prime of his youth when he had committed many sins and crimes for which he could not have any chance of atonement. Hamlet is both an idealist and a materialist just as every normal human being is expected to be.)

2. CLAUDIUS

Claudius is the villain of the play. He has got certain qualities of other villains in Shakespeare's plays, and certain other qualities which distinguish him from other villains. Like Richard III or Macbeth Claudius is a cold-blooded murderer, who commits most heinous crimes only to advance his material position and also to satisfy his bodily desires. Does he not murder his own brother with a view to rob the rightful heir to the throne of Denmark and to enjoy unlawfully his own brother's wife ? We can have sympathy for Macbeth, the murderer of his king, but cannot compromise with Claudius, the murderer of his king who is his own brother. Macbeth has plenty of poetic imagination but Claudius possesses only subtle intelligence and wicked craft. In one word, we can say that Claudius is hypocrisy incarnate. In the very beginning, when Claudius appears before us for the first time, how innocently he speaks of the death of the King of Denmark whom he has murdered with his own hand :

> "Though yet of Hamlet, our dear brother's death
> The memory be green, and what it us befitted
> To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
> To be contracted in one brow of woe,
> Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
> That we with wisest sorrow think on him
> Together with remembrance of ourselves."

Claudius can hide his wickedness or evil motive with a smiling face, and that is why Hamlet brands him as a villain who can smile

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and smile and yet remain a villain. Claudius or any other character in the play can be properly understood only with reference to Hamlet because Hamlet is the only character in the play which Shakespeare allows to develop independently of any other character. By this we do not mean that the character of Hamlet develops without any interaction with any other character, while all other characters have to act upon one another in order to attain their full development. What we mean is that every other character in the play has to be compared with Hamlet, and then alone we can understand its full significance. If we follow this method of comparison, we find that Claudius is every way the anti-type of Hamlet. For example, Hamlet is generous, frank and unsuspecting, while Claudius is extremely suspicious, hypocritical and secretly designing. Hamlet is good, while Claudius is most wicked. Hamlet is slow in his decision as well as in action but Claudius is most prompt in decision and action. Hamlet can never think of being a double-dealer but Claudius at every step and with every body is a double-dealer. Hypocrisy and double-dealing are the two cheif characteristics of Claudius. Hamlet may assume his madness sometimes ; he may even pretend to be what he is really not ; but he behaves all these ways only to save himself from the secret stab of Claudius ; but Claudius practises hypocrisy and duplicity one to do injury to others and the greatest injury to Hamlet. We find how Claudius, throughout the play, poses to be what he is not before all the other characters, whether they are his friends or enemies. Even from Polonius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he hides his real face. He never lets even Gertrude, whom he poses to love for his bodily enjoyments, know his real mind or designs. To Laertes, to Polonius, to Ophelia, and to all else in the play he plays the same hypocrite and doublde-dealer. How shamefacedly and yet tactfully he announces his incestuous marriage with the wife of the man whom he has murdered with his own hands ; how unblushingly he professes to claim Gertrude as his sister, Hamlet as his son, and the old assassionated King of Denmark as his dear and valiant brother.

Critics have misunderstood the character of Polonius, and that is why while comparing Claudius with Polonius, they say that it is only Polonius who can equal Claudius in hypocrisy and double-dealing. But then, in our opinion, Polonius is not so much of a double-dealer as Claudius, because Polonius has developed the habit of flattering the king and the noblemen : and therefore, we cannot say that it is due to his hypocrisy that Polonius is such a successful flatterer : on the contrary, we should say that it is due to habit of flattery that hypocrisy has become so natural in him.

But with all his evil qualities Claudius possesses some kind of subtle wit and intelligence with which he wins the confidence of Laertes when the latter beseiges his palace in order to kill him in revenge of his father's death because Laertes in the beginning believed that Claudius must be responsible for the death of Polonius. Claudius possesses an extraordinarily ready mind and also an unusual measures of calm and poise of the mind, and that is why he does not

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

feel perturbed even during critical moments and does not take much time in deciding his line of action whenever the occasion demands. Claudius can, therefore, be regarded as one of the most resourceful persons in the play, while Hamlet, in spite of all his good qualities and superior personality and gifts, suffers by contrast with Claudius. If we compare Claudius with Macbeth, we find that both are murderers of their kings, and both commit the murder for the fulfilment of their ambition : both try to pray for the atonement of their crime but both fail to pray because their heart has been hardened by the crime. Claudius is conscious that he is incapable of praying but Macbeth does not know why he cannot pray. That is why Macbeth suffers from insomnia and also from all sorts of hallucination while Claudius has a clear mind and a clear conception of things. Claudius is a much more daring devil than Macbeth, and that is why, in spite of Hamlet and in spite of all the reports that he gets about Hamlet's intentions to take revenge upon him he does not lose his sleep or his peace of mind or even the balance of his mind. Claudius unlike Macbeth is always ready to face the consequences of his crimes or sins, and he makes efforts also in the direction of escaping from the penalties of his crimes or sin. It is really admirable when he feels that so long he enjoys the fruits of his crimes, he cannot pray or secure forgiveness from God. No sinner, unless he has some spiritual insight or some moral courage in him, can ever feel like that. Claudius plots the murder or Hamlet with Laertes and also with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern immediately after his prayer. This may appear to be inconsistent in the eyes of certain critics but in our eyes it is perfectly consistent because a person who cannot pray sincerely to God or feel repentant at heart of his crimes, what else should he do except planning and plotting further crimes ?

Claudius lives only for material and physical pleasures, and comforts and advancements, and he does not hide this fact either from others or from himself, and that is why he courageously faces all the evil consequences of such things. Like Faustus of Marlowe he is not afraid of his soul being snatched away by the devil to hell for eternal perdition after he has enjoyed his life of sensual pleasures for a number of years, although being a creature of flesh and blood, he too cries out for help when he is stabbed by Hamlet with the poisoned sword.

Claudius is a man who believes in the end justifying the means ; he is perfectly conscious of his own weaknesses ; he believes only in self-seeking and animal pleasures : and he belives also that man has been sent to earth only for the enjoyment of his body and not for anything else. The mind or the soul of man does not matter to Claudius, and that is why he never feels any pinch of conscience like Gertrude or anybody else in the play.

Claudius is extremely shrewd, and perhaps much more shrewd than Hamlet. It is Claudius alone who suspects that Hamlet is not really mad, and that is why, in order to know the truth, he secretly engages Polonius to spy upon Hamlet while he would be meeting

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Gertrude and Ophelia and talking to them. Polonius is sure that Hamlet is mad for his love for Ophelia but Claudius fears that Hamlet's madness is merely assumed and not at all genuine.

Granville Barker remarks about the quickness of the mind of Claudius, particularly when Laertes returns from France and proceeds against Claudius, believing that Claudius must be responsible for the death of Polonius. 'We can see his mind at work ; and with what agility when, his security shattered by the sudden tidings of the failure of his plot against Hamlet, the awakened devil in him turns on the instant to make Laertes his accomplice in another.'

Many critics of Shakespeare have raised many funy questions regarding Claudius while comparing him with other villains of Shakespearean tragedies. For example, some of the critics say that Claudius is just like Macbeth but without his poetic gifts. These critics regard Macbeth as poetic because after the commission of the murder of Duncan Macbeth indulges in all sorts of hallucinations and fears of punishments for the crime, none of which Claudius, however, betrays. When, for example, Lady Macbeth asks her husband to place the bloody daggers by the side of the grooms to make them guilty of the crime, Macbeth says,

"I will go no more ;
I am afraid to think what I have done,
Look on it again, I dare not."

Then again, when Lady Macbeth asks her husband to wash his hands clean of the blood, he replies,

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand ? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red."

The critics regard such effusions of the emotion of fear as poetic expression which Claudius, however, lacks because Claudius is prosaic or cold-blooded even in his prayer or repentance, bacause he is not unduly imaginative like Macbeth, because he does not have any conscience or the fear complex from which Macbeth and most criminals suffer after the commission of some heinous crime like murder. Macbeth is imaginative while Claudius is intellectual and this makes the real difference between the two criminals. Claudius is not sentimental like Macbeth ; he is more like Lady Macbeth or Iago as Macbeth is more like Hamlet and Othello without, of course, their nobility or innocence.

A few other critics have said that Claudius is a better Christian than Hamlet, because Claudius repent of his crime by praying to God although he himself says that he is unable to pray to God because he is such a hard-hearted sinner. But why should Hamlet pray to God or repent when he has committed no crime or sin ? How can the question of Christianity arise between two when Claudius commits most unChristian act, the murder of his brother, while Hamlet commits none except taking the revenge of the murder

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of his father ? The killing of Polonius cannot be regarded as a murder because Hamlet does not kill him with any purpose but by accident. The killing of Claudius by Hamlet in the last scene of the play is justified by the law of retribution. Then again the blame of the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cannot be put upon Hamlet because he has merely taken a defensive measure by forging the commission of the king of Denmark in order to get rid of his enemies and to save his own life, for taking revenge upon Claudius finally. But Claudius not only murders his own brother but also plots against the murder of Hamlet. This is the most unChristian act. So, mere prayer before or after the commission of crime is not the mark of a Christian soul. Last of all, even after prayer, Claudius is found to plot against the life of Hamlet : he sends him away to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for his immediate execution. Is this a Christian act ?

Then again, certain other critics have raised the question whether Claudius actually loves Gertrude or not. There is no question of love between Claudius and Gertrude because Claudius believes only in sensual or bodily marriage. Claudius has murdered his brother only to usurp his crown and the body of his wife. How can a licentious and drunken beast love a woman ? How can one murder one's own brother out of love for his wife ? There is no question of loving or not loving Gertrude on the part of Claudius as there can be such a question in the case of Hamlet and Ophelia, which we have already answered by saying that Hamlet truly loves Ophelia and loves her more than twenty thousand brothers could ever love their sister.

3. POLONIUS

Some of the critics say that Polonius is a mere code of maxims and nothing else while other critics say that he speaks like a clergyman but behaves like an ass. A few other critics say that Polonius is a silly funny clown. Dr. Johnson say that Polonius is knowing in retrospect, but ignorant in foresight. Granville-Barker says that Polonius is a silly old gentleman pettily manouvering among passions and forces that are dark to him. Polonius talks about himself.

"By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion."

Some critics have pointed out that Polonius is morally and intellectually the extreme opposite of Hamlet. Let us now see if any or all the opinions of the various critics are applicable to the character of Polonius. In our opinion, Hamlet after having killed Polonius by accident remarks correctly about Polonius,

"This counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave
Who was in life a foolish, prating knave."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Polonius is not only a fool but also a knave, because his motive is always selfish. He speaks and acts only to help his self-advancement—the advancement of his son and daughter in the State of Denmark. He is the court Chamberlain of Claudius, and he wants to retain this position by any amount of flattery, by any degree of hypocrisy, by any extent of treachery, by any depth of indecency and shamelessness. His knowledge of the various maxims proves useless in his life as well in the lives of his son and daughter because he wastes these maxims too frequently upon them. He over does his part as a counsellor, and that is why he becomes a regular bore to everybody, not merely to his own children, he plays the fool in the eyes of all because he considers himself to be the wisest man. He is sublimely unconscious of his senility, and so he parades his maxims even before Claudius, who is too shrewd for any body in the play.

If Polonius were not a fool and also a mean person, could he use his own daughter as a decoy for Hamlet, could he engage Reynaldo to spy upon his son Laertes in France in order to see if Laertes is going right or wrong, could he conceal himself behind the arras to overhear the talk between Hamlet and Gertrude or watch the movements and talks of Hamlet with Ophelia ? He does all this only to please Claudius, to retain his position as the Lord Chamberlain of Denmark, and also to earn some greater favour from the king for his son and daughter. Then again, hypocrisy and flattery have become almost his second nature, and that is why he is completely unaware when he fools himself only by flattering Claudius or Hamlet. Polonius is not only an ass but also a sly fox ; but then, his slyness does not pay him anything, rather it brings about his ruin. What a fool he must be when he thinks that Hamlet is mad due to his love for Ophelia. Mark how foolishly he boasts of his foolish brain,

"I do think or else this brain of mine
Hunts not this trail of policy so sure
As it doth used to do."

Mark how confident he is about the real cause of Hamlet's madness when he says,

"Mark the encounter ; if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state
But keep a farm and carters."

The foolishness and knavery of Polonius cost him his very life but we do not feel the least sympathy for him ; we simply pity the man, who is bereft of all morality, all decency, all sincerity, all frankness and all nobility of this human heart. He is rightly killed like a rat because he is no better than a rat, a spying rat, a vicious rat, an obnoxious interfering rat.

Polonius is intellectually and morally the extreme opposite of Hamlet. Hamlet is highly intellectual and morally very noble, while

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Polonius has no intellect in spite of the many wise and moral maxims he quotes from various books or authorities for the guidance of his children or others. One who thinks himself very wise is indeed a fool. Polonius is a big fool because at every step he considers himself to be very wise although at every step he is proved to be a fool. His greatest stupidity or foolishness is proved when he assures Claudius that Hamlet is mad due to his love for Ophelia. Mark how like a self-conceited fool he speaks to Claudius while boasting of his power to discover the real cause of Hamlet's madness,

'I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centres (of the earth)'

Polonius's vanity of self-conceit deceives and outwits itself. His intellectual shallowness makes him fool-hardy and rash in his acts although he gives sermons to others for considerate action, whereas Hamlet is most considerate while doing anything. Hamlet may be slow but he always thinks of the pros and cons of every matter before he takes any action. In this respect, Polonius is much inferior not only to Hamlet but also to his master Claudius. Polonius is most unscrupulous, otherwise he could never employ his own daughter as a decoy for catching Hamlet, but Hamlet is most honourable ; he would not do anything that would degrade his idealism or his noble moral ideal. Though convinced thoroughly that Claudius is the murderer of the King of Denmark, Hamlet does not rush to kill Claudius because he wants to give the murderer the benefit of doubt ; but a self-seeker like Polonius knows no such moral scruples ; and that is why he sacrifices even reputation of his own daughter fot the sake of self-advancement. As regards his moral advice to his son Leartes, Polonius does not mind if Laertes goes morally wrong if only his immoral acts do not get any publicity or do not get him into troubles. Polonius is not a moralist in any sense ; he is an opportunist who can sacrifice everything for the sake of opportunities to serve his own selfish ends.

Dr. Johnson is perfectly right when he says that Polonius is knowing in retrospect and ignorant in foresight. Polonius possesses two distinct personalities—the personality of a father and the personality of a state Chamberlain. Hazlitt and Johnson have rightly detected the difference between two personalities of Polonius. When Polonius delivers his sermons to Laertes or to Ophelia he quotes all the maxims out of his memory, which have been gathered either by reading of books or acquired from personal observation and experience of human life and of the world. So, he is in a retrospective mood when he gives his moral advice to others. But when Polonius goes to act according to the sermons he delivers to others, he behaves like a thoroughbred fool as if he has lost his memory and has forgotten all the lessons of his own life. This forgetfulness may be due to his old age or due to the lack of intelligence which most people develop when they go to learn things by rote and not by understanding. Polonius, therefore, is just like a boy who forgets in the examination

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

hall a portion of the lesson or the answer to a particular question which he has mugged up to memory without understanding it, and that is how Polonius, like the student in the examination hall, spoils the whole job which he undertakes to accomplish. He actually undertakes the job of finding out the real cause of Hamlet's madness but ends in making a confusion of the whole thing and getting himself killed by Hamlet for nothing. This is how the career of a fool and a knave comes to an end in the play.

4. GERTRUDE

Some of the critics have laid an unusual stress upon Gertrude's guilt as the motive force of the tragedy in the play ; but they cannot prove conclusively whether Gertrude is perfectly innocent or equally guilty like Claudius. Gertrude may be passionate woman as Claudius is a passionate man but there is no hint in the play that Gertrude had any illicit connection with Claudius before or after the murder of her husband nor is there any hint that Gertrude was a party to the murder of her husband or even to her own marriage with the murderer of her husband. But there is ample hint in the play that Gertrude shed tears profusely on the murder of her husband, although she made too hasty a marriage with Claudius practically within one month of the murder of her husband. But then certain critics believe that these tears are mere crocodile tears which faithless and unloving women shed for their husband in order to deceive the world.

The Ghost speaks rather in favour of Gertrude and also urges Hamlet to be soft to her when Hamlet goes on chastising and rebuking her quite violently. But then, the Ghost may be a pen-pecked husband who has a great weakness for his wife in spite of all her faults, and so it pleads to the son on behalf of the mother. But certain words of the Ghost are quite significant, and from these words we can conclude that Gertrude is not perfectly innocent. Mark how the Ghost speaks to Hamlet on behalf of Gertrude.

> "Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
> Against thy mother aught ; *leave her to heaven*
> *And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,*
> *To prick and sting her.*"

The words in Italics indicate clearly that Gertrude is not perfectly innocent, otherwise why should her conscience prick her at all ? If Gertrude were really guilty of the murder of her husband in any manner, she would not have said to her son, 'What have I done that thou darest wag thy tongue in noise so rude against me ?' Hamlet, of course, is neither sure nor very doubtful about the guilt of his mother ; but then, he is sure that his mother has not done well in marrying in haste the murderer of her husband. But then Gertrude probably was aware at all that Claudius was the murderer of the old king, otherwise she would not have probably agreed to marry him at all, although, at the same time, we are told by the Ghost, and we also notice in the behaviour of Claudius that he must have seduced

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Gertrude or Gertrude must have had some illicit connection with Claudius before her husband had been murdered. Hamlet is possessed with the idea of only his mother's hasty marriage with the murderer of her husband and with no other idea, and that is why he tortures Gertrude throughout his meeting with her with the rudest or unkindest words. Mark how he says to Gertrude :

"What devil was it
That thus hath conzened you at hoodman-blind ?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope."

Hamlet tries to put his mother to shame by reminding her that at her age she should not have so much of the rage of lust as youthful people have : and therefore she should not have married Claudius at all forgetting her former husband, who was like a god as compared with Claudius. Mark how Hamlet again tries to pinch the conscience of his mother with the severest but truest words :

"Rebellious hell,
If thus canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame
When the convulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn
And reason panders will."

If Gertrude had been really as guilty and hard-hearted as Claudius, she would not have felt so acutely the pinches of her conscience when Hamlet reminded her of her guilt of hasty marriage with the murderer of her husband. Mark how acutely she feels in her hearts when she speaks :

"O Hamlet, speak no more :
Thou turnest mine eyes into my very soul ;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tint. O, speak to me no more,
These words like daggers enter in my ears ;
No more, sweet Hamlet."

Of course, we need not seriously take into consideration the Ghost's intervention when it says to Hamlet that he should not do any harm to his mother because Hamlet's father seems to have been a doting husband probably because she was extremely pretty and youthful, and also probably because Hamlet's father was as much passionate in his desires of the flesh as Claudius. If Hamlet's father did not have any great weakness for the feminine body and particularly for the youthful and flaming limbs of his own wife, his Ghost would not have said to Hamlet when it first appeared in the fifth Scene of the first Act,

"Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouselled, disappointed, unaneled,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my inperfections on my head."

According to certain critics, the character of Gertrude is more important than the character of Claudius because Gertrude's hasty and incestuous marriage has aroused much greater anger and revolt in Hamlet than even the murder of his father by Claudius. Some of these critics are even inclined to believe that Gertrude's guilt of hasty and incestuous marriage is a far more powerful motive force behind the tragedy of Hamlet than the force of revenge upon the murderer of Hamlet's father by Claudius. But then, we do not approve of this view at all because then, Hamlet would cease to be the hero and Claudius also would cease to be the villain of the play. Gertrude is undoubtedly a passive character herself because she has been so much subdued by Claudius in her body and soul that she cannot but echo whatever Claudius says. She has to submit to the will of Claudius when the latter suggests that Hamlet should stay in Denmark and should not go to Wittenberg ; she also cannot oppose Claudius when the latter orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take away Hamlet to England for his execution, although the motive of Claudius is not known to her. She cannot even oppose Hamlet when he blasts her with all the fury and anger of a loving son who feels honestly that the crime of marrying at an advanced age a person who is truly the murderer of her husband is too great. But then, with all the passivity of her character, Gertrude exerts the greatest impact upon the mind and body of Hamlet by her hasty and incestuous marriage, making him the hater of all womankind, the hater of haman love, and the hater of the whole human race. It is Gertrude's incestuous marriage alone which probably impels Hamlet to distrust and hate Ophelia, although he has the very same weakness for Ophelia, as his father had for his mother, because of Ophelia's flaming limbs and youthful flesh.

Whether Gertrude loved her husband or not, whether she loved even Claudius or not we cannot say but that she loves Hamlet with all her heart we find evident in all the words and gestures that she speaks or makes on any occasion. Mark how like a true mother she says to Hamlet. 'Come, I shall wipe your face' when she finds him perspiring after the first round of the fencing-contest with Laertes. Mark also how she cries out helplessly to Hamlet only and to nobody else when she is poisoned by the drink, 'O, my dear Hamlet, the drink the drink, I am poisoned.'

After this scene (the scene of meeting between Hamlet and Gertrude) we see that she has changed. This is not fully shown in the play but we know this from her coldness and distant behaviour towards Claudius. We feel that she is repentant and that she tries her best to atone for what has done. She, who was the shadow of her paramour, who merely repeated his word and dared not show her own thoughts and interests in her son, now substantially sides with him. She tells a lie about Hamlet to shield him. She declares

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that Hamlet has killed Polonius in his madness, and that he is weeping over the dead body, We know that Hamlet did nothing of the kind. He did not repent but he dragged away the corpse in the most heartless and perfectly satisfied manner. Not only this, she disobeys Claudius in drinking the cup of poisoned wine in the lost scene, and this disobedience is her death. It is the most tragic destiny of this unfortunate queen. She is made to die by the very man who had loved her in his own way, and for whose possession had poisoned his brother. This shows that Gertrude is not an actively evil woman but one whose poverty of judgment is exploited by a clever paramour. She is to be blamed for retaining her youthful passion after a period of thirty years of married life. But it is her fate to be so. Like Peter Pan she refuses to grow old. But towards the end of the play, she recoils from the man whom she learn to be the cause of her undoing. She is not wholly lost to evil. As soon as she learns the truth about Claudius she severs her sympathy from him. Her interest in Hamlet is proportionately now wholly genuine. She shields him, and is genuinely touched by the death of Ophelia. Her vision of a happy Hamlet married to Ophelia shows her true nature. She shows a true mother's solicitude at the fencing match. It is one of the most pathetic touches in her last moment when, dying of poison, she calls Hamlet in order to wipe his perspiring face. Thus she dies, and we sympathise with this helplessly beautiful queen whose goodness is perverted by Claudius.

5. OPHELIA

Ophelia is undoubtedly a pretty young woman, otherwise she could not have attracted the Prince of Denmark so much that her father should think that Hamlet is over head and ears in love with her. Of course, it is perfectly true that both Hamlet and Ophelia were in great love with each other, particularly during those happy and peaceful days when Denmark was not disturbed by any foul murder or by any incestuous marriage. But then, with the change of circumstances, both Hamlet and Ophelia seem to have adjusted themselves to the conditions, but we are not prepared to believe, like other critics, that Hamlet altogether ceased to love Ophelia out of his hatred for the whole race of womankind due to his mother's hasty and incestuous marriage with the murderer of her husband, or that Ophelia ceased to love Hamlet because of the undue pressure or warnings of her father and brother. Of course, it is true to a great extent that Hamlet suppressed his love instinct because of his great determination to take revenge upon the murderer of his father ; and Ophelia too had to surrender herself completely to the autocratic interference of her father and her brother in the matter of her love for Hamlet. Some of the critics have said that if Ophelia had a strong will, she would have surely protested against this interference from her elders, and that Hamlet too would have continued loving Ophelia in spite of his great

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by MoE-IKS and FIST Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

undertaking of revenge. But then, these critics fail to realise that so far as Hamlet is concerned, immediately after his meeting with the Ghost, his one purpose, one aim, one thought is to take revenge, and that so far as Ophelia is concerned, she cannot possibly go against the will of her father who is so much in the confidence of Claudius and who may be doing some great injury to Hamlet through Claudius. But if we judge both Hamlet and Ophelia by some of their words, we cannot but be convinced that both loved each other till the last moment of their life. Hamlet, for example, says clearly that even twenty thousand brothers like Laertes could not love Ophelia so much as Hamlet loved her, and Ophelia too could not utter better words than she does in high praise of Hamlet and in great regret of his madness ;

'O, what a noble mind is here overthrown ;
The courtier's, soldier's eye, tongue, sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down.'

Ophelia's madness is primarily due to the suppression of her love for Hamlet and secondarily due to the death of her father. Ophelia goes off her head because she is of weak intellect on whom the suppression of the strongest instinct of human nature invariably worked its greatest havoc. Hamlet is a man and also he possesses a very strong will power, and that is why he can stand the strain of the suppression of the same powerful instinct.

Both Gertrude and Ophelia are equally passive and docile, Gertrude is oppressed by the will of Claudius, while Ophelia is oppressed by the will of Polonius and Laertes. In both the cases, this oppression is the cause of their tragedy, although some of the critics would say that Gertrude's own guilt brings about her tragedy, while Ophelia's undue obedience brings about her tragedy.

Both Hamlet and Ophelia are placed suddenly in some peculiar situations, and that is why they have to shift their line of action, which again brings about their tragedy because both Hamlet and Ophelia lack those qualities which are required for overcoming the new situation. In the case of Hamlet, the sudden revelation of the murder of his father upsets the equilibrium of his mind, and therefore, he cannot attend to any other job than the job of taking revenge upon his father's murder. Some of our readers may say that Hamlet does not take revenge immediately nor does he do anything for hastening the revenge. That is perfectly true ; but it does not mean that he forgets his task of revenge ; on the other hand, he constantly plans and plots all possible contrivances by which he may first of all be sure of the crime of Claudius and then be sure of an opportunity to strike him. That is why he has to pretend madness and do all that sort of acting before Ophelia, Polonius, and all else in order to serve his own end. That is why he has to be indifferent and even cruel to Ophelia in the matter of recognising or responding to her love.

CC-0. Jangamwadi Digital Preservation Foundation, Chennai. Funding by IKS-MoE 2023 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia too, on the other hand, because of the change of circumstances under the new King of Denmark and under pressure of her father and brother, has to pretend a lot of indifference to Hamlet by actually returning all his love tokens and thereby giving a wrong impression about her love to Hamlet. Hamlet may be taking Ophelia seriously when she returns all his former love tokens, but Ophelia knows that she is serious about it only for show to her father and brother. If Ophelia were not seriously in love with Hamlet, she would not have gone off her head simply on account of her father's accidental death. Some of the critics lay an undue stress upon the song she sings during her fits of madness and also upon her reference to her father's death in the songs ; and the critics explain these references to Polonius's death as nothing but the psychological reaction of her grief upon her mind leading to her madness. But then, none of the critics has considered the great reacion of the frustration in love, the suppression of the sex desire in Ophelia as the real cause of her madness.

Morton Luce has remarked about Ophelia, 'She is a maiden innocent as innocence, child-like as childhood, yet very woman of very woman, whom a Queen would gladly take to her as a daughter, whose bride-bed a Queen would have decked with flowers ; who was importuned with the love of Hamlet in honourable fashion, besmirched with no spil, no cantel ; who returned his love with such maiden modesty that the selfish warning of her brother, the coarse injunctions. the impertinent inquiries of her father, the fantastic insinuations of her half frenzied lover ; could not convict her of one evil thought : she in whose grave that brother and that lover contended for loving martyrdom ; she form whose fair and unpolluted flesh may violets spring.

Granville-Barker remarks about Ophelia from another angle. 'We call her docility a fault, when, as she is bid, she shuts herself away from Hamlet ; but not trust to her brother's care for her and her father's wisdom. How can we question the part she is made to play later when not her father only but the King and the Queen themselves prepare her for it ? Ophelia seems to have no individuality of her own, and the meddling of her father, her brother, the King, and even the Queen in her private affairs brings on her suffering and tragic fate.' Morton Luce again says, 'I doubt whether any character in Shakespeare is more completely a victim to the requirements of tragedy.'

Various critics have passed various remarks on Ophelia. For example, Hazlitt says 'Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon.' Masefield remarks, 'Ophelia is a doll without intellect.' Madariaga says, 'Ophelia is in fact a flirt ;a fast girl whose model was Ann Boleyn the young beauty who ascended the throne by way of the King's badroom.' Mrs. Jameson remarks, 'Ophelia poor Ophelia : Oh far too soft, too good, too fair, to be cast among the briars of the working day world, and fall

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and bleed upon the thorns of life,' Mrs. Jameson's remark is rather sentimental, while Madariaga's remark is absolutely unwarranted. Madariaga must have been misled by the words of Hamlet about Ophelia who is sometimes talking in fits of pretended madness and sometimes in a sarcastic tone, and therefore Hamlet's words about Ophelia throughout the play cannot be taken seriously except where he says that twenty thousand brothers could not love their sister so much as he loved Ophelia. What Ophelia or Hamlet was before they were introduced to us in the play is no concern of ours. But the critics have speculated even upon the past career of both these two characters and have wasted their brains for nothing.

Just as Hamlet's tragedy is brought about by Hamlet himself, so also Ophelia's tragedy is brought about by herself. It is her undue submission to the father's will, to her brother's will that brings about so many of her calamities. If she had not allowed Polonius or Laertes to interfere with her business she would have been probably most helpful to Hamlet in working out the revenge of murder far more normally than it has been worked out in the play. Hamlet would never have assumed his madness before Ophelia, as he does not do it before Gertrude, if he had known that Ophelia would defy the influence of her father or brother. It is only for keeping Polonius and Claudius in perfect darkness that Hamlet assumes madness ; and because he knows that Ophelia is too weak to resist either Polonius or Laertes, so he pretends madness even before Ophelia to mislead her and also her father and brother through her.

Ophelia may be simple, innocent, passive, obedient, docile but she is not without intellect. We find how she says to Laertes that it is easy to give sermons but it is difficult to practise those sermons. She means to say that Laertes may give moral advice to her but Laertes will not follow any of that advice in his own life. She says that everybody shows the difficult path to others but follows the easiest path himself This kind of discrimination is not the sign of a person without intellect but it is the mark of one who under-stands what is really good and what is really bad. We should, therefore, believe that Ophelia is shrewd like any body else, but then, she does not like to show off her shrewdness probably because she does not want to annoy her father or to discourage her brother.

Ophelia is not even too soft and too good or even too fair for the working-day world. She is just like other women of the world with the only difference that she does not like to create unpleasantness with her elders by opposing or defying them. She is, on the other hand, a very intelligent girl, and that is why she agrees to do just as her father advises her to do. She is not even aware of what her father is going to do with her. She is completely ignorant of the secret motive of Polonius that he wants to spy upon her talk with Hamlet or to find out the cause of Hamlet's madness from his talk with her. If she had known all this beforehand, we do not know how she would have behaved in the long run.

CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

Digitized by eGangotri Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Certain critics of Shakespeare have been trying to prove that there are two Hamlets, two Ophelias and two Horatios, basing their arguments on the Saxo and Beleforest versions of the story of Hamlets. But then, in our opinion, there is no such thing in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, although he has borrowed the story of Hamlet from both Beleforest and Saxo because in that case Shakespeare can be accused of artist's inconsistency. We conclude that the statement about the two Ophelias is true if we take it to mean that Shakespeare has created his Ophelia out of the courtezan of the old play ; but it is wrong if it is suggested that the courtezan walks straight into the play of *Hamlet*, without being adjusted to the conception of Ophelia as we are made by Shakespeare to see it, namely, that she is a fair young woman fallen in love with Hamlet but made to fall out of it by her father. There is no warrant for agreeing with, for example, Granville-Barker, who says that we have in the Nunnery scene a visible part of the process, of Shakespeare's transference of the story from the physical to the psychological plane. 'There is no visible process', because there is no inconsistency which makes us doubt that there are two Ophelias. There is the invisible evidence for assuming that Shakespeare bases his Ophelia upon the courtezan of the old story. Criticism will infer from a study of the sources that Ophelia is connected with, but not the same as the courtezan. Shakespeare has changed her to suit his purposes, which is to show us that Ophelia's love is an irrelevance in the tragic destiny of Hamlet. But there is nothing in the text to warrant us that he makes Ophelia serves the same purpose as the courtezan does in the old story. It is in the capacity of a spy or decoy only that Ophelia is comparable to the courtezan, not in her harlotry or prostitution in the ph sical sense. And Granville Barker need not assume that Hamlet is not aware of Polonius's plan right from the beginning of his scene. Hamlet, whether he heard Polonius or not, has come prepared to reject Ophelia, and he treats her harshly only because this will help him to reject her with less pain. He knows what Polonius has done to separate Ophelia from him. His address to him as fishmonger is proof of that, if his allusion to him as "Jeptha" were also not an additional proof of this. So, it is obvious that Shakespeare has betrayed no carelessness in adapting his sources for the purposes of his art.

Several critics have raised such questions about Ophelia : Why does she behave in such a manner to Hamlet if she loves him at all ? Why does she agree to play the decoy to Hamlet ? Why does she submit to her father's will so readily and so shamefacedly ? Why does she not throw hints to Hamlet that she is merely playing a part as Hamlet is also playing a part, that she is not at all a frivolous, flippant flirt ? In answer to all these questions we have to say that Ophelia cannot behave otherwise than she does in the play of Shakespeare simply because she is placed in a particularly dramatic situation, the situation of a revenge tragedy, and not love tragedy. Hamlet also has to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

behave in a rude or loveless manner because his duty as the son of a murdered father requires it ; and Ophelia also behaves in a similar manner because she has to fulfil the duty of an obedient daughter to her father, however selfish, mean and hypocritical he may be. Ophelia, therefore, is not a morally or intellectually weak creature as some of the critics have taken her to be. Ophelia's obedience is, of course, abused by her father and by wicked Claudius. On the other hand, Ophelia is strong enough to sacrifice her love for Hamlet for the sake of her obedience to her father. The virtue of obedience becomes in her case the cause of her tragedy. Hamlet seems to be aware of this virtue of Ophelia and also of her self-sacrifice otherwise he would not have compared Polonius with Jeptha, a father who sacrifices his own daughter. Ophelia is, therefore, a victim of paternal stupidity or meanness or selfishness. And because Hamlet is aware of Ophelia's simplicity, her innocence, her obedience, so all his remarks which are spoken to her are really intended to be spoken to Polonius. Hamlet's words to Ophelia are, therefore, all ironical. That is why a critic like Professor Dunn has remarked, 'It is the Ophelias, and not the Portias nor the Desdemonas, who attract the Hamlets in all ages and all societies.' So, if we study either Hamlet or Ophelia as a dramatic characters, we find that both of them behave most naturally from the dramatic point of view, which demands that Ophelia's obedience to her father and brother should be the cause of her tragedy just as Hamlet's speculative nature is the cause of his tragedy.

There are good many points of similarity between Ophelia and Gertrude : but then, on this account, we should not believe that Ophelia is Gertrude in the making or that Gertrude is but full-fledged Ophelia. Of course, both Ophelia and Gertrude are essentially simple, innocent, passive,docile and unintellectual, and as such, they are exploited and abused by the evil forces like Polonius and Claudius. Both of them are physically attractive, and that is why they drive both Hamlet and Claudius distracted with infatuation. Claudius goes to the extent of murdering his own brother in order to possess his beautiful wife. And so far as Hamlet is concerned, he too accidentally kills Polonius and removes the major obstacles in the way of his love for Ophelia. Aesthetically speaking, Ophelia may be the mistress of Hamlet but morally speaking, she is not at all so, whatever Gertrude may be to Claudius.

In our opinion, both Gertrude and Ophelia should be taken as mere creatures of comfort and earthly pleasures ; they should not be regarded as morally depraved or degraded to serve any immoral purpose of their infatuated lovers. Gertrude does not even know that Claudius is the murderer of her husband ; Ophelia also is not aware that she is being used as a decoy by her father. Claudius is a subtle villain while Polonius is a stupid but mean and selfish creature ; and hence, both Claudius and Polonius victimise Gertrude and Ophelia for the achievement of their own selfish or immoral ends, which however, should not make the victims immoral in any sense.

CC-BY. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by KS-MoE&2025-Govt.

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia is too simple to realise the spiritual agony of Hamlet, as Gertrude is also too ignorant to know the treacherous villainies of Claudius.

Edith Sitwell has interpreted the significance of the character of Gertrude and Ophelia in a new light. She says that Gertrude and Ophelia are fertility-symbols, or in other words, they both belong to the world of dust and appearances. The views of Edith Sitwell are corroborated further by Dr. Gilbert Murray, "Their animal nature (i. e. of Gertrude and Ophelia), their complete blindness to and unawareness of values other than those of the earth, is evidently an explanation and illustration of their being Fertility Symbols or Spring Ghosts. There is nothing moral or immoral about them. They represent the principles of procreation, and are fields for the sowing of seeds. That is why Ophelia is associated in the play with flowers and songs—she being a symbol of Spring and of Primy Nature. The old legends about the Fertility Rituals describe the fertility demons as dressed in flowers and cast into a stream (see the drowning of Ophelia with flowers), in rejecting Ophelia, Hamlet rejects all earthly values, sends her back, as it were, to the world of dust where she belongs along with Gertrude, her elder sister in a sense. Hamlet has to make his spiritual journey alone, which is his tragedy."

6. LAERTES

Ophelia rightly says to Laertes when he gives her moral advice 'Do not show me the step and thorny way to heaven, while you are yourself treading the primrose path of dalliance.' Laertes is a libertine who loves Paris, the city of pleasures of the senses—eating, drinking, gambling, fencing. putting on of fashionable dress, and even visiting brothels. The very fact that Polonius delivers such long sermons to his son and also that he engages Renaldo to spy on the movements of Laertes in Paris, indicates clearly that Laertes has all the human weakness of the flesh. Probably, some of the critics are right in feeling that Laertes must have inherited all these weaknesses from his father, as he has inherited the lecturing habit also from him. But Laertes is not a diplomat or a hypocrite like his father nor is he probably so very selfish and mean as Polonius. He loves his father and also his sister : but then, he is unintellectual, rash, impetuous and reckless in every possible way. When he returns from France on hearing of the death of his father we find how rashly he collects a few reckless persons like himself and proceeds against Claudius, taking him to be the murderer of his father ; but when Claudius with his own tact and shrewdness misguides him against Hamlet, how quickly he plays the victim of Claudius's wicked designs. Laertes betrays not only cowardice but also meanness when he agrees to fight a fencing contest with Hamlet with a poisoned sword to kill Hamlet treacherously.

We have not the least sympathy for either Laertes or for Polonius because they have no regrets for their crimes and sins.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Polonius's behaviour towards his own daughter and Hamlet is as mean and heinous as the behaviour of Laertes towards Hamlet who loves and admires Laertes in spite of his enmity to him. This makes the difference between Hamlet and Laertes. The fencing contest brings out the true character of Laertes. If he were in the least honourable, if he had any moral scruple, if he had any sense of justice, fairness, honesty, he would have never agreed to get his sword poisoned to use it against Hamlet, who is completely ignorant of the foul play. Of course, we can say that Laertes is as much the victim of the wiles and wicked designs of Claudius as Ophelia is the victim of the mean and selfish motive of Polonius.

Laertes serves as a striking contrast to Hamlet in every respect. Hamlet is highly intellectual, philosophic and speculative. He is noble, honest, perfectly honourable, loving and extremely conscious and also most calculating in all his actions lest he should do any wrong to anyboby by mistake. But Laertes is most reckless and rash. His quickness of action means his recklessness, which again means his thoughtlessness. Laertes has no sobriety except in his moral maxims, which he never follows in his own life, but which he quotes for others to follow. He appears to be very much moved by the news of his father's death ; but when he comes in touch with Claudius, he loses all his enthusiasm for punishing the murderer of his father in an honourable manner but stoops to the most mean and treacherous manner of taking his revenge which degrades him in our eyes. Laertes offers some contrast also with Horatio and Fortinbras just as Hamlet offers similar contrast with Fortinbras and Laertes. Horatio is quite the opposite of Laertes in every respect because Horatio is a scholar and a philosopher, while Laertes is an uncultured brute, who has picked up only the shams of French or European culture, which in those days used to be worshipped by the Danes and which used to demoralise the Danes. Fortinbras is no doubt a man of action as compared with Hamlet, who is man of 'inaction'. But Laertes cannot be considered as a man of action in the same sense as Fortinbras, because Fortinbras is more cool-headed, more prudent, and perhaps more honourable than Laertes. If fortinbras were not far superior to Laertes, he would not have been accepted by Horatio and other survivers as the new King of Denmark when Claudius, Hamlet, and all others are killed in the last scene of the play. Of course, Fortinbras, too, like Laertes collects hastily some lawless resolutes on some mercenary temptations in order to snatch away the piece of land, with was lawfully won by the old King of Denmark in a fencing-contest with the old King of Norway. Fortinbras, in the play, has been described by Shakespeare as a 'youth of unapproved mettle, hot and full,' just as Laertes is also a youth who is most reckless, hasty and violent.

Just as the soliloquies bring out correctly the real character of Hamlet so also the words, which Laertes speaks to Claudius, bring out the real nature of Laertes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"O thou vile King,
Give me my father.
How came he dead ? I will not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance vows, to the blackest devil
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest it
I dare damnation; to this point I stand—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I will be revenged
Most thoroughly for my father."

The words of Laertes do not reflect any greater love for his father than the slow and thoughtful action of Hamlet reflects his love for his father. The fundamental difference between Laertes and Hamlet is that Laertes is a man of sound and fury which suddenly rises and suddenly subsides, while Hamlet is a man of thought that rises from cool-headedness and ends in the same tragedy in which the sound and fury of Laertes also end. Laertes is theatrical, while Hamlet is cool, sober and patient, and that is why Laertes appeals to be mock-heroic, while Hamlet appeals to be true-heroic. Laertes excites no feeling in the audience except that of pity" contempt and ridicule while Hamlet excites the feelings of sympathy" grief, and despair. The tragedy of Laertes does not impress anybody but the tragedy of Hamlet makes the deepest impression upon everybody, although both of them have practically the same cause of revenge and sorrow—the cause of a murdered father. But with what a difference the spirit of revenge is born in each, how differently it is conducted, and with what a great contrast it is fulfilled ! This difference explains the real difference between Laertes and Hamlet.

7. HORATIO

Horatio does not take any very substantial part in the play although he appears in some of the scenes. And yet Horatio's character is no less important than that of any of the minor characters like Leartes or Fortinbras or Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. Horatio is the good angel of Hamlet as Claudius is his evil angel. He is the alone friend of Hamlet in the whole play. He keeps the perfect balance between Laertes and Hamlet, between Polonius and Hamlet, between Fortinbras and Hamlet. He is a great scholar but not a dreamer like Hamlet. He is also thoughtful like Hamlet but he is neither a cynic nor a pessimist. His love for Hamlet is ideal love. We find the real expression of his love when he proposes to die at the moment when Hamlet is stabbed by Laertes with the poisoned sword.

Horatio represents rationality, freedom from superstition, and culture of the Renaissance. In the whole play, Hamlet alone can match Horatio in the sense of honour, justice, and fairness. Hamlet is a man who is not passion's slave, and that is why Hamlet loves and adores him. Horatio seems to be the most disinterested character in the whole play probably because he is a bachelor or an eternal student or has no sister maddened or no father murdered or no

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

mother united in incestuous marriage with her husband's murderer. But then, Horatio seems to have interest only in Hamlet, and that is why he does not like to live after the death of Hamlet. It is wrong to say that Horatio is passionless and cold or that he is colourless and unresponsive because if there had not been any Horatio in the play Hamlet would have grown really mad and most gloomy and pessimistic. Foolish critics have suggested that Horatio's love for Hamlet is homosexual, because Horatio is presented to us as a man without any family, while Hamlet is presented to us as a young man disdaining the love of a pretty young girl like Ophelia.

Hamlet describes Horatio,

"As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Had taken with equal thanks."

Had there been no Horatio in the play, Hamlet would have been more friendless, fatherless, motherless, and loveless. Professor Dowden says, 'Horatio's equanimity, his evenness of temper is like solid land to Hamlet after the tossings and tumult of his own heart.' But Horatio with all his virtues has no dramatic importance in any sense except as a mirror and prop to Hamlet. Horatio does not move the action of the play in any way, although by contrast he brings into bolder relief some of the characters in the play, particularly, the self-seeking people such as Osric, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, whose pretensions, selfishness,and even treachery are brought to light by the honourable, noble, honest, and broad personality of Horatio. Horatio's presence in the drama makes it both tragical and poetical. It is Horatio who lives and survives Hamlet in order to tell the world that Hamlet was not a mere blood-thirsty hero whose sole business was to kill Polonius, or to send Ophelia to a different but equally cruel end, or destroy Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and stab both Laertes and Claudius.'

A critic says that the presentation of Horatio's character is a masterpiece of dramatic economy. Horatio speaks much less than Polonius ; he acts very little in the play ; he does not meddle with any affair of anybody in the play, and yet his personality is far more felt than that of Polonius or Fortinbras or Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. We notice that whenever Hamlet requires any sober thinking or any sound judgment for action or any kind of guidance, help and encouragement, Horatio at once appears on the scene, which tempts us to believe that Horatio is just like the other self or *alter ego* of Hamlet. Horatio can be regarded as one lonely piercing spiritual light that softens as well as heightens the gloom of the tragedy.

Some Spanish and Danish Critics of Shakespeare have advanced many fantastic notions about Horatio, just as they have done by inventing double-Hamlet and double-Ophelias. In the case of

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio, too, they have pointed out double-Horatios, and thereby, the artistic inconsistencies of Shakespeare. But these critics have talked all these funny things only to make noise and attract notice of the literary world.

A few other critics have said that Horatio is nothing but a reporter to Hamlet, because it is he who reports to Hamlet about the Ghost of Hamlet's father ; it is he who reports to the citizens of Denmark and to Fortinbras, the King of Denmark, how Hamlet was not a mere blood-thirsty hero who had killed not only Claudius but also his mother, Polonius, Laertes, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But Horatio is much more than a mere reporter from the dramatic point of view. Supposing there were no Horatio in the play, how would the play have proceeded or ended in the long run ? Hamlet must have some body to confide his secrets, and it is Horatio who plays the role of Hamlet's confidant. We find in Scene II of Act V how Hamlet talks on every thing, how he escaped from the hands of the sea pirates and also he managed to kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern by the same weapon with which they wanted to kill him. In the grave diggers' scene also, Horatio helps Hamlet in expressing his heart over the graves in the churchyard and thereby bringing out one of the most significant aspects of Hamlet's character—his cynicism and pessimism, which would otherwise have remained unrevealed to the audience. This is not an ordinary function of Horatio in the play. Then again, in Scene VI of Act IV, Horario serves as a great instrument in conveying the message of Hamlet's escape from the hands of the sea-robbers, to Claudius, which indirectly helps the action of the play. We find Horatio sufficiently helpful to the action of the play, particularly when Hamlet lays the mouse-trap for catching the conscience of Claudius. Hamlet engages Horatio for the purpose of observing the reaction of the play within the play upon Claudius. Hamlet could not entrust the job to any other person in the whole play because everybody else in the play is practically his direct or indirect enemy. We meet Horatio also in the first, second, fourth and fifth Scenes of the first Act in which Horatio's presence is an important role because Horatio alone accosts the Ghost and reports the incident to Hamlet : it is he alone who advises Hamlet what he should do if the Ghost happened to be an honest Ghost. It is he who explains the political condition of Denmark and also other ceremonies which were prevalent in the time of Hamlet. None of these functions, we have pointed out, is unimportant as some of the critics have felt or tried to prove by their own argument, which are not at all convincing.

8. ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the school-fellows of Hamlet just like Horatio but with what a difference ! These school-fellows have imbibed all the evil things of European education and have developed in them a hateful love of the artificial and the sham with the result that they have lost their sense of morality, conscience

CC-0 Panjab University Chandigarh. Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and every other feeling of the human heart which makes areal man and not a human brute.

We come to know that both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been called away from their school to Denmark by Claudius and Gertrude in order to change the mind of Hamlet that constantly broods over the death of his father. But then, these school-fellows of Hamlet turn into spies to draw out the secrets of the mind of Hamlet and also to discover the cause of his real or pretended madness. It is only after some time that Hamlet comes to know them in their true colours; otherwise he being a noble soul treats them in the beginning as friends, as he treats Horatio also as his friend.

Both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern seem to be almost similar in their habits of mind and manner; and therefore, to take them apart would be a dramatic fault which some of the critics have committed by treating them separately. They are just like twins with different faces but with one soul, one mind, one aim, one everything That is why critics have raised the question why Shakespeare has introduced such twins. He should have better introduced one or more than two so that they would have remained the same or could be distinguished one from others. But Shakespeare here, as in the case of Hamlet and other characters, exercises economy.

Goethe has remarked about this twin, 'Yet what these persons are and do, it is impossible to represent by one. In such small matters we find Shakespeare's greatness. These soft approaches, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling, flattering, this whisking ability, this wagging of the tail, this allness and emptiness. this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity,– how can all this be represented by a single character ? There ought to be at least a dozen of these people, if they could be had ; for it is only in society that they are anything : they are society itself ; and Shakespeare showed no little wisdom and discernment in bringing in a pair of them' Granville-Barker says that these two creatures are a single non-entity divided into two.

Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are characterless, insignificant characters, yet they have much of dramatic importance in the development of the action of the play as well as in the deepening of the tragedy of Hamlet. They are called back by the King and Queen of Denmark to cure Hamlet of the malady of his strange behaviour but they unfortunately help to intensify Hamlet's malady by betraying their own meanness, hypocrisy and treachery and also by conspiring with Claudius against his very life, although we should believe that these two school-fellows of Hamlet are mere puppets in the hands of Claudius and they have absolutely go independent will or existence of their own. Of course, they agree to work as Claudius's spies surely on the temptation of some courtly favour or preferment, which they would have possibly enjoyed had they not been done to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

death by the same weapon which they wanted to use against Hamlet. Some of the critics say in defence of these two 'non-entities' that they are neutral, stupid and as such harmless ; but in our opinion such fools precending to be neutrals are far more dangerous than knaves or positive and declared enemies. Hamlet's tragedy becomes all the more painful and pathetic because of the contact of these two foolish knaves with him. That is why Hamlet, after having sent them to death, does not feel the least compunction in his own soul because he knows that they have proved to be the greatest traitors to him after having professed their old school friendship. Of course, both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are duly punished for their foolish knavery, althought unforunately they are not even aware how the axe of restribution came upon their neck all of a sudden from the blue.

9. FORTINBRAS

Fortinbras appears but once at the end of the play, though he is reported by Horatio in the beginning of the play also. He speaks hardly more than twenty seven lines ; and that is why most of the annotators and many of the critics of Shakespeare have overlooked him, because they did not consider him of any dramatic importance. But in our eyes, the character of Fortinbras is of much more dramatic importance than that of Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Laertes or other such characters. Fortinbras serves as a foil to Horatio, Laertes and Hamlet, and without Fortinbras we could not realise that real significance or dramatic importance of any of the three characters just now mentioned. Fortinbras is a man of action, and as such, he bears some similarity with Laertes but then, Laertes is unintellectual, immoral and reckless, while Fortinbras is highly intellectual, highly conscientious and honourble and highly moral in his aim and views of life and human conduct. we have heard of Fortinbras from the lips of Horatio as made of unproved mettle, hot and full, but then, he is not reckless and foolish like Laertes in this respect. We get a correct picture of Fortinbras when he appears upon the stage with his army marching forward and getting victory over Poland, which makes Hamlet philosophise and remark.

> "Examples gross as earth exhort me,
> Witness this army, of such mass and charge
> Led by a delicate and tender prince
> Whose spirit, with divine ambition puffed
> Makes mouths at the invisible event;
> Exposing what is mortal and unsure,
> To all that fortune, death and danger dare
> Even for an eggshell."

The very fact that Hamlet advises Horatio to choose Fortinbras as the King of Denmark after his death and the death of Claudius goes to prove that in the eyes of Hamlet, who is the hero of the play, he is the most deserving character in the whole play for the crown of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Denmark. It is wrong to think that Hamlet does not envy the character of Fortinbras when particularly he recommends Fortinbras for the throne of Denmark. If Hamlet could follow the footsteps of Fortinbras in his mission revenge, he would have been a greater hero in the eyes of certain critics, who think that Hamlet is slow, calculating, over-reflecting, while Fortinbras is a man of action. The Hamlet who praises Fortinbras is surely a Hamlet, who envies Fortinbras,as surely as he envied the clam serenity of Horatio whose balance of blood and judgement excites his admiration. With all respect to Granville-Barker's admirable analysis of Hamlet's character we cannot agree with him when he says that Hamlet does not envy Fortinbras, but that he only envies Horatio. We do not see the point in Hamlet's praise of Fortinbras if we do not also see an underlined emulation of the practical, successful man of action that Fortinbras is. He is definitely put in as a contrast to the vacillating, overthinking Hamlet. And our supposition is strengthened by the fact that Hamlet gives his dying voice of consent to the kingship of Fortinbras over Denmark. If truth sits upon the lips of dying men, we cannot but feel that Hamlet does envy the strength of characters represented by Fortinbras. It is Fortinbras, who remains which Horatio on the stage to let us know that life goes on in its own way, after the fitful fever of tragic passions has passed away. We are made to feel by the presence of these two that life needs serenity of mind (Horatio) and practical, executive genius (Fortinbras) to make it full. The Hamlets and Claudiuses, the Gertrudes and Ophelias, the Rosencrantzs and Guildensterns. the poloniuses. and Laerteses—these are the passing show of the tragedy of life, not life itself. It ts deeply significant ending that Shakespeare gives to all his tragedies. We rise from our seats with the conviction that we have witnessed a feverish spectacle which thrilled us, but that normal currents of life assert themselves in the person of the Fortinbrases and Horatios of the world. Would it be too fanciful to imagine that Denmark is now going to be ruled by Fortinbras the king and Horatio, his trusted minister. Whatever this may be, it is clear that Fortinbras is an important figure in the play. Though he is only glimpsed at here and there in the course of the play, his character is vividly realised through what Hamlet, Horatio and others tell us of him. He impresses us as a power in the background, working without rest and without haste, towards its own ends. His presence excites our imagination very powerfully; and though he speaks no more than twenty seven lines, his character is eloquent by its silence,the silence of all strong and powerful characters. In short *Hamlet* without Fortinbras is as inconceivable as *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

10. THE CLOWNS OR THE GRAVE DIGGERS

The Clowns or the grave-diggers are the most important minor characters in *Hamlet*, although they help little in the advancement of the action of the play except psychologically. In Shakespeare's

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

plays, particularly in his tragedies, the Clown, in spite of being a comic character, makes the audience not only laugh and forget the sorrows and misfortunes and the tragic tensions of human life but also makes the audience keenly conscious of the true realities of life by exposing the contrast between the realities and the shams. The Clown in most of the comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare plays the role of the observer, the critic, the philosopher in the play. He reminds man of the nothingness of his life, on the one hand, while on the other, he urges us to forget all the misfortunes and sorrows of life because otherwise we shall go mad like Hamlet. He sometimes explains certain most intricate problems of life which are not otherwise intelligible to us. He also satirises, criticises, and moralises over human actions and human pettinesses in all aspects of life ; and that is why the Clown is regarded in Shakespeare's play not a mere fool but one of the wisest characters.

In *Hamlet* the clowns play the role of the grave-diggers as in *Macbeth* the clown is the devil-porter, and in *King Lear* he is the fool but the wisest fool. The Churchyard, in which the clowns are digging the grave or rather preparing the grave of Ophelia, is the most significant scene in the whole play because here Hamlet arrives after his narrowest escape from execution in England, because here Ophelia whom Hamlet loves more than twenty-thousand brother could do is to be buried, because here Hamlet himself will have to lie in his own grave very soon, because here the audience is reminded of the great tragedy which is coming, and because here every one is made to feel the striking contrast between the sham realities of court life and the true realities of the life of the common people like the grave diggers and of the grave for all human ambitions, human activities, human love, human hatred, human treachery, human hypocrisy, human jealousy, human passions and human emotions.

The manner in which the clowns speak or sing or jest or criticise or satirise, shows their complete indifference to all sorts of pride and vanity in which the monarchs, kings and princes indulge ; it shows also how truly they speak about men and things to which we attach so much value and distinction so long as they are alive and do not sink into the grave. It is by grave-digging that the clowns lend all the more truth to the realities of life and prove all the more falsehood of the shams of life. The clowns forget totally whose skulls they are digging and throwing with the greatest indifference, and their criticism of the past lives of the persons, whose skulls they are throwing up, is most correct and significant. The greatest irony of their talks lies in fact that while they are talking about Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, who is the hero of the tragedy, they are absolutely unaware that Hamlet is standing before them and also joining them in their ironical and humorous talk as if there is no difference between a great prince and the diggers of graves.

It is also equally significant that the clowns (grave-digger), the philosopher (Horatio) and the mad man (Hamlet) should be united

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

in the same scene, while they are alive as they would all be united in the same grave when they would die. The audience is, no doubt, relieved of the tragic tension of the previous scenes of the play by the talk of the clowns but the audience is no less burdened with a deeper gloom of the coming tragedy in the play. Therefore, the clowns in *Hamlet* do not play exactly the role of the clowns as we find them playing in the comedies of Shakespeare; their role here is far more tragic than that of even Hamlet who is the tragic hero of this play. Most of the critics have taken the clown as comic characters; but in our eyes, the clowns are the most tragic characters, first, because they are actually digging the grave of Ophelia, second because they are preparing Hamlet for the grave, and last of all, because they are reminding the audience that all will have to lie in the grave sooner or later.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

HAMLET

(TEXT WITH PARAPHRASE)

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HAMLET

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.
HAMLET, son to the former, and nephew to the present King.
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.

VOLTIMAND,
CORNELIUS,,
ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN,
OSRIC,
A Gentleman,
} courtiers

A Priest,

MARCELLUS,
BERNARDO
} officers.

FRANCISCO, a soldier.

REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.

Players.

Two Clowns, grave-diggers.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.

A Captain.

English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.

OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers.
and other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

SCENE : *Denmark*.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

HAMLET

PRINCE OF DENMARK

ACT I

SCENE I. **Elsinore.** *A platform before the castle*

Francisco *at his post. Enter to him* **Bernardo.**

Bernardo. Who's there ?
Francisco. Nay, answer me : stand and unfold yourself..
Bernardo. Long live the king !
Francisco. Bernardo ?
Bernardo. He.
Francisco. You come most carefully upon your hour.
Ber. Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed Francisco.
Francisco. For this relief much thanks ; 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.
Ber Have you had quiet guard ?
Francisco. Not a mouse stirring.
Bernardo. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.
Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho ! Who is there ?

Enter **Horatio** *and* **Marcellus**

Hor. Friends to this ground.
Marcellus. And liegemen to the Dane,
Fran. Give you good night.
Marcellus. O, farewell, honest soldier :
Who hath relieved you ?
Francisco. Bernardo has my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit.*
Marcellus. Holla ! Bernardo !
Bernardo. Say,—
What, is Horatio there ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

HAMLET

PARAPHRASE

ACT I

SCENE I. **Elsinore.** *A platform before the castle*

Francisco *at his post. Enter to him* **Bernardo**

Ber. Who is on duty there ?

Fran. You better stop there, and tell me who you are.

Ber. May our king live long !

Fran. Is that Bernardo ?

Ber. Yes, I am Bernardo.

Fran. You seem to be strictly punctual.

Ber. It is now twelve o'clock. You should better now retire, Francisco.

Fran. Thank you very much for this relief. It is extremely chilly, and I am very much depressed.

Ber. Did you notice anything during your watch ?

Fran. Not a mouse was moving.

Ber. Good night, then. If you happen to meet Horatio and Marcellus, ask them to hurry up, because they have to join me in the watch.

Fran. I seem to hear their voices. Who is there ? Stop.

Enter **Horatio** *and* **Marcellus**

Hor. We are friends.

Mar. We are loyal subjects of the King of Denmark.

Fran. Good night to you.

Mar. Good night, loyal soldiers ! Who has taken your place of duty ?

Fran. Bernardo has taken my place. Good night to you both.

[*Exit*

Mar. Where are you, Bernardo ?

Ber. Is that Horatio with you, Marcellus ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio : welcome, good Marcellus.

Mar. What, has this thing appeared again to-night ?

Bernardo. I have seem nothing.

Marcellus. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us :
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night ;
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it ;

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Bernardo. Sit down awhile ;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

Horatio. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Bernardo. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,

Mar. Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes again !

Enter **Ghost**

Bernardo. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Marcellus. Thou art a scholar ; speak to it, Horatio.

Bernardo. Looks it not like the king ? mark it, Horatio.

Horatio. Most like : it harrows me with fear and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Marcellus. Question it, Horatio.

Horatio. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march ? by heaven I charge thee, speak !

Marcellus. It is offended.

Bernardo. See, it stalks away !

Horatio. Stay ! speak, speak ! I charge thee, speak ! [*Exit* **Ghost**

Marcellus. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio ! you tremble and look pale :
Is not this something more than fantasy ?
What think you on't ?

Horatio. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. Yes, something like Horatio.

Ber. Both of you are welcome, Horatio and Marcellus.

Mar. Did the spirit appear tonight again ?

Ber. I have noticed nothing so far.

Mar. Horatio is not prepared to believe in this dreadful spirit, although it has been seen by us twice. He says that it is all a thing of our imagination. That is why, I requested him to come along with me and watch every minute of the night to see if the spirit appears again. And if the spirit, appears, he will have to believe what we have told him and also to speak to the spirit.

Hor. It is all nonsense : the spirit will never appear.

Ber. Let us wait for a moment and try to convince you again of what we have actually seen for at least two nights which, however, you are not prepared to believe.

Hor. Well, let us wait and listen to Bernardo's story again.

Ber. Particularly last night when that same star had moved from the Pole star to the position it is now occupying in the sky, myself and Marcellus were on duty and the clock was striking one.

Enter **Ghost**

Mar. Hold ! stop and see the spirit appears again !

Ber. He looks exactly like the dead king.

Mar. Horatio, you are a learned man ; and so, you better speak to the spirit.

Ber. Just see, Horatio ; does it not resemble the king ?

Hor. Yes, quite so. I am really perturbed with fear and anxiety.

Ber. The spirit is prepared to listen.

Mar. Speak to him. Horatio.

Hor. Who are you that appear at this hour of the night in the majestic form of the king of Denmark who is dead ? In the name of God, I urge you to reply to me.

Mar. The spirit seems to be annoyed.

Ber. Look, how it is moving away.

Hor. Stop ! Speak ! I ask you to speak, [*Exit*. **Ghost**

Mar. He has disappeared and did not care to reply to you.

Ber. How is it, Horatio, you look pale and seem to be frightened. Don't you think it was more than our imagination ? What is your opinion now ?

Hor. By God, I could never believe it to be true if I had not seen it with my own eyes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Marcellus. Is it not like the king?

Horatio. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not;
But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task,
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:
Who is't that can inform me?

Horatio. That can I:
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last King,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was as, you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet—
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—
Did slay this Fortinbras: who, by a seal'd compact
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of to the conqueror
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,
And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the spirits of Norway, here and there,
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't: which is no other—
As it doth well appear unto our state—
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsatory those foresaid lands
So by his father lost; and this, I take it,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mar. Does not the spirit resemble the king ?

Hor. As much as you resemble yourself. He put on the very same armour which the king had put on while fighting with the King of Norway ; and he put on the same angry looks as the King of Denmark did, while he struck down the Poles who move in sledges on the ice. It is really strange.

Mar. In this very manner and at this very hour he marched past our watch twice previously.

Hor. I do not know what may be his intention but as far as I can understand, his visitation is a token of some great disaster to our country.

Mar. Well, let us think for a while. Let us ask him who knows why such a strict watch is kept, why the citizens are made to work so hard every day, why the weapons of war are being made, why so much of war material is being purchased from foreign countries, why so many ships are being built, why there is no rest for the labourers even on Sundays, and why they are made to work throughout the day and throughout the night. Who can tell us the reasons for all this ?

Hor. I can tell you so far as the rumour goes. Our late king, whose spirit appeared a moment ago, was forced to fight a duel with Fortinbras of Norway who was prompted by a spirit of jealousy and vanity, but who was killed in the duel, because our king was known in Denmark as a brave fighter. Fortinbras, according to the terms of the combat, duly sanctioned by the laws of the country and also by the rules of chivalry, lost his life as well as all the lands which he had seized unlawfully from our king. A portion of the lands of equal value, as promised by our king, would have gone to Fortinbras if he had won the combat. But according to the terms of the combat, the portion of the lands of Fortinbras came to our king because he was the winner of the combat. Now, Young Fortinbras, who is hot blooded and inexperienced, has collected some daredevil type of persons from the suburbs of Norway on the mere temptation of food and drink, with a view to make an experiment of an attack on our country in order to recover by force the lands which were lost lawfully by his father to our king in the combat. In my

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

Bernardo. I think it be no other but e'en so :
Well may it sort, that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch : so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.

Horatio. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun ; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologues to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.—
But, soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !

Re-enter **Ghost**

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion !
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me :
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me :
If thou art privy to thy country's fate
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak !
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[*Cock crows*
Speak of it : stay, and speak ! Stop it, Marcellus.

Marcellus. Shall I strike at it with my partisan ?

Horatio. Do, if it will not stand.

Bernardo 'Tis here !

Horatio. 'Tis here !

Marcellus. 'Tis gone ? [*Exit* **Ghost**
We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence ;
For it is, as the air invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Bernardo. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

opinion, all these preparations, all this strict watch, and all these activities day and night are intended to meet that threat of attack from young Fortinbras.

Ber. I also think that it must be the same as you say. It is very likely that this ominous Ghost, who appeared before us in the same war-like dress of the King of Denmark, is the cause of the great quarrel between Norway and Denmark.

Hor. Like a particle of dust in the eye, the Ghost is troubling our mind. During the most glorious days of Rome just before the murder of Julius Caeser, many unusual things happened, such as the graves opened wide and the dead bodies came out of them and walked through the streets of Rome, screaming and howling : there were comets with tails of fire and blood dropping from the sky ; there were dark spots in the sun indicating the coming of calamities to the earth ; the moon which governs the tides in the oceans that form the kingdom of Neptune, seemed to be darkened as if the day of extinction of the world had arrived ; and many other fearful phenomena occurred as if great calamities were going to visit the earth. In the same way, the appearance of the Ghost and all these preparations of war are indications of great disasters or misfortunes which are going to overtake our country in the near future.

Re-enter **Ghost**

Silence ! Look how the spirit appears again ! I will question him though he may destroy me. Stop, you shadowy thing ! If you can speak or utter anything, I urge you to speak. Tell me if you want me to do any service to you by way of lending peace and rest to your soul. If you happen to know what calamity is going to overtake our country, tell us the secret so what we may prevent the calamity. If you have collected in your life-time some treasure unlawfully and concealed it in the ground, and if you are now looking for it as all departed souls look for their secret treasure, let us know of it. (*The cock crows*). Marcellus stop the Ghost.

Predman Krishen Dha
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

Mar. Should I strike it with my spear ?

Hor. Do, if it will not stop.

Ber. Look, it is here !

Hor. Yes, it is here ! [*Exit* **Ghost**

Mar. The spirit disappeared, we are insulting the spirit by putting up a show of violence at it in this vain-glorious manner. Our blows cannot wound the spirit as they cannot wound the air, and thus they are being put to shame.

Ber. The spirit was just going to speak when the cock crowed and made it disappear.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day ; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Marcellus. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever ' gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad
The nights are wholesome : then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm ;
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Horatio. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :
Break we our watch up : and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet : for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him :
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Marcellus. Let's do't, I pary ; and I this morning know
Where we shall and him most conveniently. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II *A room of state in the castle*

Enter the **King, Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius, Lords** *and* **Attendants.**

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in brow of woe
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. As the cock crowed, the ghost was started, as if feeling guilty on being called away. I have heard that the cock, who sounds the approach of the morning, awakens the day with its shrill cry, on hearing which all wandering spirits of the various elements hasten back to their respective homes ; and this fact has been proved by the sudden disappearance of the Ghost.

Mar. The ghost disappeared just as the cock crowed. Some people say that on the occasion of the celebration of the Christmas (birth of Christ) the cock crows throughout the night, and people believe that no spirit can come out of its grave, no evil star, no witch, no wicked fairy can exercise its charm because the hour is so sacred and auspicious.

Hor. I have also heard this and now I believe it myself. Just see how the sun with its rosy veil is spreading its glamour all over the eastern horizon. Let us withdraw our night watch, and speak to Hamlet about what we have seen tonight. The ghost which did not speak to us may speak to Hamlet. Do you agree with me that out of our love and sense of duty we should disclose the secret of our experience to Hamlet ? [*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle*

Flourish. *Enter the* **King, Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius, Lords** *and* **attendants**

King. Although the memory of the death of our dear brother, Hamlet, is quite fresh, and although it was quite proper for us all to express our sorrow jointly on that account yet our good sense prompted us to be moderate in our grief in consideration of certain duties to ourselves. Therefore, with joy mingled with grief, I have married my former sister-in-law, who now is the Queen and joint ruler of our kingdom ; this action we have taken with partial joy ond grief in our heart, mingling a sorrowful occasion with a joyous ceremony, with tears in our eyes and joy in our hearts, representing both the feelings of funeral and marriage, of delight and sorrow at the same time. In this matter we have consulted your superior judgement which you have very frankly given to us, for which we thank you all most sincerely. Now, the matter that concerns us next is that young Fortinbras,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

With this affair along : for all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras
Holding a weak supposal of our worth.
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender to those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valient brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting ;
Thus much the businesss is : we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein ; in that the levies,
The lists and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject : and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway :
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.
Farewell and let your haste commend your duty,

Cor. Vol. In that and all things will be show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* **Voltimand** *and* **Cornelius**

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?
You told us of some suit : what it t, Laertes ?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice , what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy ask'ng
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes ?

Laertes. My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France ;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation ;
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon ?

King. Have your father's leave ? What says Polonius ?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent :
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

thinking that we are weak or that our kingdom has fallen into disorder after the death of the previous king, has been encouraged by this imaginary situation to demand from us the portion of lands which his father lawfully lost to our brave brother, and to which effect young Fortinbras has been sending us message after message. So much about Fortinbras. Now let us tell you why we have called this meeting. We have written to the old uncle of Fortinbras, who is lying seriously ill in his bed and who is not even aware of his nephew's motive, to put a check upon the movements of young Fortinbras who has collected soldiers out of his uncle's subjects and has made all sorts of war-like preparations against us. I now propose to send you, Cornelius and Voltimand, with a message to the King of Norway, granting you no more power than what is laid down in this document. Good bye ! But perform your duty as soon as possible.

Cor. } We shall perform our duty as best we can in not only carry-
Vol. } ing the message but in all other affairs.

King. We have no doubt about that. Good-bye to you with all our hearts. [*Exeunt* **Voltimand** *and* **Cornelius**

And now, Laertes, what is the matter with you ? You made some proposal to us. What is that: Laertes ? Whatever reasonable you will demand from us, it is sure to be granted. What is there that you would like to have and which will not be readily granted by us even without your demand ? The head is not more intimately connected with the heart nor the hand more helpful to the mouth than the King of Denmark is ready to oblige your father. Tell us, Laertes, What you would like to have.

Laer. Your great majesty, I am seeking your gracious permission to return to France from where I came to Denmark to pay my homage to you on your coronation. Now that my loyal duty has been performed I am waiting for your gracious permission to return to France.

King. But have you taken your father's permission ? What does Polonius say ?

Pol. He has, my lord, taken my permission after repeated prayers which I granted to him rather reluctantly. I, therefore, pray that you should also kindly grant him permission to leave for France.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will !
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,

Ham. [*Aside*]. A little more than kin, and less than kind

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you ?

Hamlet. Not so, my lord ; I am too much i' the sun

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust :
Thou know'st' tis common ; all that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet. Ay, madam, it is common

Queen. why seems it so particular with thee ?

Hamlet. Seems, madam ! nay it is ; I know not "seems".
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods shapes, of grief.
That can denote me truly : these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play :
But I have that within which passeth show ;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father.
But, you must know, your father lost a father ;
That father lost, lost his and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term,
To do obsequious sorrow : but to persever
In obstinate condolement, is a course
Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief ;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd :
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart ? Fie ! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd ; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first course till he that died to-day,
"This must be so". We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. You can leave for France, Laertes, any time that suits your convenience and the auspicious moment of your departure. Let us now talk to our cousin, our son Hamlet.

Ham. (*Aside*). I am much nearer as a relative and yet farther away from love and affection.

King. How is it that you are still wrapt in a cloud of gloom ?

Ham. Not at all, my lord ; I am rather too much exposed to the sun (*i. e.* light of happiness).

Queen. Dear Hamlet, give up your gloomy looks and behave like a friend to the King of Denmark. Do not constantly brood over the death of your father. You know that every living thing must die and pass from mortality to immortality. Death is a very common thing.

Ham. Yes, Madam, death is indeed a common thing.

Queen. If it is so, how is it that you *seem* to make an exception of it ?

Ham. Why do you say, madam, I "*seem*" ? No, I actually *make* an exception of my father's death. I can assure you, good mother, that neither my dark clothes, which are my mourning garments, nor my deep-drawn sighs, nor my streams of tears, nor my sad looks, nor any such thing can truly reveal my real self. These are all outward things which anybody can pretend to have. But what is really in my heart cannot be expressed in any manner. All that you see in me is but outward tokens of the real grief in my heart.

King. It is good and creditable for you, Hamlet, that you are so devoted in remembering your father. But you should know that your father lost his father and your grandfather lost his father, and so on ; and it is the duty of every survivor to mourn the death of his predecessor for some limited period of time : but if one goes to mourn such death for an indefinite period it shows merely his obstinate nature, an effeminate sorrow, an attitude which is wrong in the eyes of God, a heart without control and a mind without patience, and a power of understanding which is foolish and untrained. When we know that death is inevitable and is as common as any trifling thing on earth, why should we take it seriously. How shameful it is to do so ! This sort of mourning over the death of one's father is against the laws of God, the laws of nature, laws of life that must die, and the laws of human reason or understanding particularly when one knows that everybody must lose his father, that everybody must die as everybody died in the past and will die in future. It is, therefore,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

As of a father : for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne :
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire :
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet : I pray thee, stay with us ; go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply :
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come ;
This gentle and unforced accord to Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt all except* **Hamlet**

Hamlet. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew !
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His connon 'gainst self-slaughter ! O God ! O God !
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world !
Fie on't ! O, fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this !
But two months dead ! nap, not so much, not two :
So excellent a king ; that was, to this
Hyperion to a satyr : so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !
Must I remember ? Why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on : and yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't,—Frailty, thy name is woman !
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears ;—why she, even she—
O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother ; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules : within a month ;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

our earnest wish, Hamlet, that you should forget your grief and look upon us your parents. We are declaring before all people here that you are the immediate successor to the throne and that we love you as dearly as parents should love their son. As for your going to school in Wittenberg it is positively against our heart's wish, and therefore, you should make up your mind to stay here with us in order to cheer our heart with delight and comfort by being our most important courtier, relative and son.

Queen. I hope, Hamlet, you are not going to disappoint your mother in her wishes ; you should stay here and not go to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall obey your wishes, madam, as best as I can.

King. Your reply is Just like that of a loving son. Stay in Denmark and live in our family. Madam, let us go. This polite and natural obedience of Hamlet pleases me very much. In order to celebrate the occasion, every body will drink health with the loudest report of the guns which will resound the earth and the sky. Come away.

[**Flourish.** *Exeunt all but* **Hamlet**

Ham. I wish that this body of flesh would dissolve and turn into drops of dew or that God had not decreed against committing suicide. O God ! how useless, colourless, miserable and disgusting this world appears to me ! Curse upon such as a world where nothing but weeds grow and all sorts of dirty and evil things abound. I could never imagine that things would take such a turn. My father died hardly two months ago ; such a good king he was ; this present king (Claudius) is just like a satyr when compared to my father who was like Hyperion ; he was so loving to my mother that he would not allow even winds to touch her face rudely. O heavens ! it is too painful for me to recollect how my mother used to crave for my father's company with an increasing desire but now within a month what a change has come upon her ! I cannot think of it. Woman is nothing but weakness incarnate. Just a month ago my mother followed the funeral procession of my father like Niobe with tearful eyes. Even the shoes that she wore then have not gone old. Even an animal that has no power of reasoning, would mourn longer. She too hastily married my uncle, her dear husband's brother who could never be compared with my father just as I cannot be compared with Hercules. Within a month before

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

before the salt of her tears had dissolved the marks in her eyes.
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married, O, most wicked speed! what an indecent and treacherous hurry
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good for such an unholy marriage -
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue let me keep quiet - although my heart is breaking within -

Enter **Horatio**, **Marcellus**, *and* **Bernardo**

Horatio. Hail to your lordship!
Hamlet. I am glad to see you well:
Horatio,—or I do forget myself. me & he were like if not me & he
Horatio. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Hamlet. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? what come from
Marcellus?
Marcellus. My good lord,—
Hamlet. I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg? made you come from Wittenberg.
Horatio. A truant disposition, good my lord. Habit of running away from school.
Hamlet. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence, I would not allow you to
To make it truster of your own report infuse my ears with such false a report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore? your mission
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart. Before you leave we Shall drink hard.
Horatio. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
Hamlet. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student; too severe truant
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
Horatio. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.
enemy
Hamlet. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats must be baked
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. was served for funeral for marriage
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven wish to have met my deadliest
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio! enemy in Heaven than to see the
My father—methinks I see my father marriage of my mother.
Horatio. Where, my lord?
Hamlet. In my mind's eye, Horatio, imagination
Horatio. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
Hamlet. He was a man, take him for all in all, true sense of term
I shall not look upon his like again. never meet a man like him:
Horatio. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Hamlet. Saw who?
Hor. My lord, the king your father.
Hamlet. The king my father!
Horatio. Season your admiration for a while Control your wonder
With an attent ear, till I may deliver, listening to me carefully
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you. really marvellous a story.
Hamlet. For God's love, let me hear.

Swear by God.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the salt of her tears had dissolved the mark in her eyes she got married. What an indecent and treacherous hurry for such an unholy marriage ! No good can come out of this. But let me keep quiet although my heart is breaking within.

Enter **Horatio, Marcellus** *and* **Bernardo**

Hor. I greet you, my lord.

Ham. I am pleased to find you keeping fit. It must be Horatio if I am not mistaken.

Hor. Yes, my lord, I am always at your service.

Ham. Sir, my good friend, I would rather like to be your servant. But what made you come here from Wittenberg ? Is that Marcellus ?

Mar. Yes, my lord,

Ham. I am much pleased to see you. (*To Ber*). Good evening, Sir. But Horatio, what made you come from Wittenberg ?

Hor. The habit of running away from school, my lord.

Ham. I would not bear even your enemy to say like that about you, nor would I allow you to injure my ear by speaking such lies against yourself. I know that you are not run away from school. But what is your mission in Elsinore ? But before your leave the place we shall drink hard.

Hor. My lord, I came to attend your father's funeral.

Ham. Please do not taunt me, my fellow-student. I think, you came to attend my mother's marriage.

Hor. Really, my lord, your mother's marriage came too soon after your father's death.

Ham. It is economy; Horatio, it is economy. The food that was served at my father's funeral was used at my mother's wedding. I wish I had met my deadliest enemy in heaven before I had seen my mother's marriage. Horatio, I think, I sometimes see my father.

Hor. Where do you see, him my lord ?

Ham. In my imagination, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once—he was an excellent king.

Ham. He was a man in the true sense of the term, and you should take him as that. I shall never meet a man like him.

Hor. My lord, I think, I saw him last night.

Ham. Whom did you see ?

Hor. My lord, I saw the king, your father.

Ham. Did you really see the king, my father ?

Hor. Please control your wonder by listening to me carefully till I speak to you something really marvellous which will be certified by these gentlemen.

Ham. In the name of God, let me hear it.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear.
Stand dump, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did ;
And I with them the third night kept the watch :
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes : I knew your father ;
These hands are not more like.
Hamlet. But where was this ?
Marcellus. My lord, upon the platform where he watch'd
Hamlet. Did you not speak to it ?
Horatio. My lord, I did ;
But answer made it none : yet once methought
It lifted up it head, and did address
It self to motion, like as it would speak :
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.
Hamlet. 'Tis very strange.
Horatio. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.
Hamlet. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me
Hold you the watch to night ?
Marcellus, Bernardo. We do my lord.
Hamlet. Arm'd, say you ?
Marcellus. Bernardo. Arm'd, my lord.
Hamlet. From top to toe ?
Marcellus Bernardo. My lord, from head to foot.
Hamlet. Then saw you not his face ?
Horatio. O, yet my lord ; he wore his beaver up.
Hamlet. What, look'd he frowningly ?
Horatio. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Hamlet. Pale or red ?
Horatio. Nay, very pale.
Hamlet. And fix'd his eyes upon you ?
Horatio. Most constantly.
Hamlet. I would I had been there.
Horatio. It would have much amazed you.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. For two successive nights, these two gentlemen—Marcellus and Bernardo—have seen him at dead of night. A figure exactly like your father, armed from head to foot, appeared before them and walked majestically within the length of his staff so that their eyes were frozen with fear into jelly, and they could not utter a single word to him. They talked to me about it most nervously. I kept the watch with them the third night. The spirit appeared again exactly in the same manner and at the same time as they had reported to me. I recognised your father. My hands do not resemble each other more closely than the spirit resembled your father.

Ham. But on which spot did this thing occur ?

Mar. My Lord, it happened upon the plat form where we kept the watch.

Ham Did you speak to the spirit ?

Mar. Yes, my Lord, I spoke to him but he made on reply. He, however, once raised his head in a manner to speak, but just then, the cock crowed, and he moved away in a hurry and was seen no more.

Ham. It is really strange thing.

Mar. But upon my honour, my Lord, it is perfectly true, and we consider it our duty to keep you informed of this.

Ham. Really, sirs, is it right ? But it is causing me anxiety. Are you going to keep watch to-night ?

Mar. } Yes, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. Did you say, he was fully armed ?

Mar. } Yes, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. Was he armed from the crown to the toe ?

Mar. } Yes, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. Did you notice his face ?

Hor. Yes, my lord ; he put on the visor holding it up.

Ham. Did he look angry ?

Hor. He looked sad rather than angry.

Ham. Did he look pale or flushed up ?

Hor. No, he looked very pale.

Ham. Did he gaze at you ?

Hor. Yes, most steadfastly.

Ham. I wish, I were there.

Hor. It would have struck you with great wonder.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?
Horatio. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
Marcellus, Barnardo. Longer, longer.
Horatio. Not when I saw't.
Hamlet. His beard was grizzled? no?
Horatio. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.
Hamlet. I will watch to-night:
Perchance' twill walk again.
Horatio. I warrant it will.
Hamlet. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. If pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue,
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.
All. Our duty to your honour.
Hamlet. Your loves, as mine to you; farewell.
[*Exeunt.* **Horatio Marcellus,** *and* **Bernardo**

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

SCENE III. *A room in Polonius' house*

Enter **Laertes** *and* **Ophelia**

Laertes. My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.
Ophelia. Do you doubt that?
Laertes. For Hamlet and the trifling of this favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood;
A voilet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent sweet, not lasting
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.
Ophelia. No more but so?
Laertes. Think it no more:
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Quite likely. But did he stay long ?

Hor. As long as one could count one hundred without any haste.

Mar. } No, he stayed longer.
Ber. }

Hor. Not longer when I saw him.

Ham. Was his beard grew or not ?

Hor. It was partly dark and partly grey just as I had seen while he was alive.

Ham. I will keep watch to-night. Possibly he may appear again.

Hor. I am sure, he will appear again.

Ham. If the spirit appear in my father's form, I will positively speak to him even if hell opens its jaws and forbids me to speak. If you have so far kept this incident a secret I would request you to maintain it as a secret even now. And whatever you may see or hear to-night please do not disclose it to anybody. For this secrecy I will reward you sufficiently, So, good-bye ! I will meet you upon the platform between eleven and twelve to-night.

All. We shall obey your command most loyally.

Ham. Accept my love in return as I depend upon your love. Good-bye ! [*Exeunt* **All** *but* **Hamlet**

They said that my father's spirit appeared fully armed. It is not a good sign. I suspect some act of treachery, I wish the night had arrived ; but till then let my mind be calm. Crimes or evil deeds will come to light however much one may try to hide them. [*Exit*

SCENE III. *A room in* '*Polonius*' *house*

Enter **Laertes** *and* **Ophelia**

Laer. All my necessary things have been put in the ship. So, I would like to bid you good-bye. But, sister, do not forget to write to me so long as the winds are favourable and the transport is helpful for the purpose.

Ophelia. You should not have any doubt about that.

Laer. As regards Hamlet's offer of love to you, you should treat it as a mere custom and a passing fancy of the aristocrats just as a violet flower in the early spring blooms and scatters its fragrance for a while and then melts away. It is certainly a pleasant but not a permanent thing.

Ophelia. Do you think, it is no better than that.

Laer. Do not take it any way better than that. As the body grows and develops the mind or the spirit too develops in proportion. Probably he loves you at present, and his love may be quite free from all impurities. But you must consider his high position,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

His love blw boom all imparities –
And now no soil nor cautel doth, besmirch
The virtue of his will : but you must fear, understand
His greatness weigh'd his will is not his own : Subordinate to the
For he himself is subject to his birth : laws of noble births.
He may not, as unvalued persons do, Ordinary people.
Shape his destiny Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends on his will
The safety and health of this whole state ; Kingdom .
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed his claims and will
Unto the voice and yielding of that body Subordinate to circumstances
Where of he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
If fits your wisdom so far to believe it, Should believe you as much as
As he in his particular act and place Circumstances & Place would permit you
May give his saying deed ; which is no further to believe –
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal. Should know cannot go an inch beyond what the people say
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain, Risking you honour
If with too credent ear you list his songs ; take seriously his words of love
Or lose your heart. Unlock your chastity to his passion, show weakness
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection, Keep a safe distance from his
Out of the shot and danger of desire, passionate hankerings –
The chariest maid is prodigal enough, Modesty is delicate enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon Women expose her beauty to moon
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes its true women cannot escape bad name
Insects destroy early buds The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed ; Before they bloom .
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth Prime of youth - women's modesty
Cotagious blastments are most imminent Exposed to risks of Contagion is called
Careful then Be wary, then ; best safety lies in fear : Fear selves Precautions
Youth to itself rebels ; though none else near. Even while alone .

Ophelia. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Unholy Do not, as some ungracious pastors do, self-centred
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;
indulge in Whiles, like a puff's and reckless libertine,
acts of pleasure Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede. does not heed his own advice

Laertes O' fear me not.
I stay too long : but here my father comes. detained too long.

Enter **Polonius**

A double blessing is a double grace ;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

What I've Preach
Shewed Precept
Yourself .

I have the chance of taking
your leave a second
with a new blessing –

To France

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and that, as much, he is not free to do whatever he likes, his will being subordinate to the laws governing his noble birth. Like the ordinary persons he cannot shape his own destiny or act according to his own will because the welfare of the while kingdom, of which he is the head, depends upon his actions. If, therefore, he says that he loves you, you should believe it as much as and not beyond what his particular actions and circumstances at the moment would permit you to believe, because you should know that he cannot act an inch beyond what the people and the King of Denmark would dictate. So you can well imagine how you would be risking your honour if you take seriously all his sweet words of love or if you give away your heart to him or if you unlock your chastity to his passion. Ophelia, my dear sister, do not show your weakness to him, but on the other hand, you should keep yourself at a safe distance from his passionate hankerings. Woman's modesty is so delicate that it will bear some dark spot even if a woman exposes her beautiful body to the moon. Even a virtuous woman cannot escape from earning a bad name if she is slightly careless or unguarded about her modesty. Just as we find that even the buds of flowers in the early spring are infected or destroyed by the insects, so also in the prime of youth a woman's modesty is very likely to be exposed to risks of being infected or soiled if one is in the least careless or unguarded. So, let her be very cautious so that fear may serve as her protection. A person in youth is liable to have a fall even while alone or away from temptations.

Opl. I shall remember your words of advice to guard myself against any fall. But, my good brother, just as some unholy priests preach sermons to others and show them the most difficult way of self-control for their practice but who in their own life indulge in all sorts of bodily pleasures and acts of indiscipline, so you should not warm your sister against such pitfalls and yourself at the same time sink into them.

Laer. Do not worry about me. I am afraid, I am being detained here too long. Here comes our father.

Enter **Polonius**

Here I h ve a chance of taking leave of you again and hence, I have the opportunity again of receiving your blessing for my journey to France.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Polonius. Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for shame !
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There, my blessing with thee !
[*Laying his hand* **on Laertes'** *head*
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel :
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel : but being in,
Bear't, that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice :
Take each man censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habits as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich not gaudy :
For the apparel oft proclaims the man
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, cheif in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be :
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all : to thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell : my blessing season this in thee !
Laertes. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.
Polonius. The time invites you ; go, your servants tend.
Laertes. Farewell, Ophelia : and remember well.
What I have said to you.
Ophelia. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.
Laertes. Farewell. [*Exit*
Polonius. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?
Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
Polonius. Marry, well bethought :
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous :
If it be so,—as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution—I must tell you.
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you ? give me up the truth.
Ophelia He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pol. How is it, you are still waiting here, Laertes ? It is a pity that you have not yet boarded the ship. The wind is now fovourable, and your boat is waiting for you to sail off. Here I am offering my blessings to you. Try to remember a few words of my advice. Do not disclose your mind to anybody; do not act thoughtlessly; you may cultivate intimacy but not any indecent relationship with others; try to stick fast to those persons who have proved to be your real friends but never waste your time, money or energy upon those who are your mere acquaintances newly acquired; do not pick up any quarrel with anybody unnecessarily but once you have got into a quarrel, try to make your opponent feel your strength so that he may be afraid of you in future ; always listen to everybody but do not give out your mind to others ; welcome everyboy's criticism about yourself but do not risk your criticism about other; your clothes should be respectable and decent but not showy because it is by the clothes that a person's character or status is judged. The poeple of France, particularly, the aristocrats are fashionable and lavish in their dress. Do not borrow money from anybody or lend money to anybody because borrowing leads to extravagance while lending leads to the loss of friendship as well as of money. But most of all, you should remember that you have to be true to yourself because otherwise others will not be true to you. Good-bye May my blessings help you in remembering my words of advice !

Laer Most respectfully I am bidding you good-bye, my father !

Pol. Time is passing away ; your servants are waiting,

Laer. Good-bye, Ophelia ! But remember all that I have told you.

Oph. It is perfectly safe in my memory unless you make me forget it by your own behaviour in France.

Laer. Good-bye !

Pol. What is it, Ophelia, that Laertes has told you ?

Oph It is something about Lord Hamlet.

Pol. I am well reminded. I have been told that recently Hamlet has been meeting you secretly and you also have been encouraging him. If it is true, as I am told, I should like to tell you that you do not seem to realise your position or honour as my daughter. Speak the truth because I should like to know what actually has been going on between you and Hamlet.

Oph: Recently, he has been making his offers of love to me.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pol. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl, 100
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Ophelia. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Polonius. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay, 105
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly
Or—not to crack the Wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

Ophelia. My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion 110

Polonius. Ay, fashion you may call it: go to, go to

Ophelia. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Polonius. Ay, springs to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul 115
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence; 120
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you; in few, Ophelia, 125
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investment show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
The better to beguile. This is for all:
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth, 130
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

Ophelia. I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE IV. *The platform before the castle*

Enter **Hamlet, Horatio,** *and* **Marcellus**

Hamlet. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
Horatio. It is a nipping and an eager air.
Hamlet. What hour now?
Horatio. I think it lacks of twelve.
Marcellus. No, it is struck.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pol. Do you talk of love? You talk like a foolish inexperienced girl without any knowledge of experience of what a dangerous game love is Do you really trust his offer of love ?

Oph. I do not know, my Lord, how I should take it.

Pol. I will instruct you. If you take his offer of love as true when it has no significance whatsoever, you must be behaving no better than a child. Do not make yourself cheap, and that is what I really mean otherwise I would be a fool indeed.

Oph. My Lord, he has offered me love in an honourable manner.

Pol. You many call it honourable but I know what—it is all nonsense.

Oph. My Lord, he has supported his words of loves with sacred oaths in the name of God.

Pol. Yes, they are all snares for catching silly birds. I know it quite well that when one is overflowing with youth one is extravagant in his words of love, which seem to express warm feelings but which in reality lack sincerity. You should not take such words as promisas of real love. From now you should try to be less frequently visible to him, and you should consider your own presence as much costlier than his approaches. As regards Hamlet, you should not forget that he is young and that he is privileged to enjoy greater freedom than you are entitled to. In short, Ophelia, do not trust his oaths because they are mere unholy temptations to beguile an innocent girl like you, although they may appear to be put in a serious language and uttered in a solemn manner. This is all I have to say, and I shall tell you frankly that I do not want you to waste your leisure moments in talking to Hamlet or by allowing him to talk to you. This is my command, and you must not forget my warning. Now, come along with me.

Oph. I shall obey you, my lord.

SCENE IV. *The platform*

Enter **Hamlet, Horatio** *and* **Marcellus**

Ham. The air is better : it is extremely cold.

Hor. It is a pinching and biting air.

Ham. What is the time now ?

Hor. I think, it is not yet twelve.

Mar. No, it has struck twelve.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. Indeed ? I heard it not : then it draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*

What does this mean, my lord ?

Hamlet. The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and, the swaggering up-spring reels ;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Horatio. Is it a custom ?

Hamlet. Ay, marry, is't :
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations;
They clepe as drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition ; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin,—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausive manners;—that these men,—
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect, if they have one defect :
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star'—
Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo—
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.

Horatio. Look, my lord, it comes !

Enter **Ghost**

Hamlet. Angels and ministers of grace defend us !
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee : I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane : O, answer me !

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. Is it so ? I did not hear the bell. The time then is approaching near when the spirit is in the habit of appearing.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordinance shot off within*

What is the significance of the trumpets blowing and the guns firing ?

Ham. The king is keeping awake to-night and indulging in drinking and dancing in a wild fashion ; and while he is doing so by drinking Rhenish wine and by making an unsteady gait, the kettle-drum and the trumpet are beating and blowing and announcing his drunken revelry

Hor. Is it the practice here ?

Ham. Yes, it is. But as far as I know, as a native of this place and as one who knows the customs and manners of this place, this kind of wild revelry is neglected rather than observed. This wild reverly earns us a bad name in all countries around us and we are branded by other nations an drunken beasts and this takes away much of the glory and credit which we may have earned for ourselves by our various heroic and noble deeds. Just as some particular defect in some human individuals, though it is not a self-acquired but natural characteristic of their nature : or just as some abnormal characteristic of their nature when brought prominently to view mars the beauty of their personality ; or just as some evil habit which is indulged in by them brings a bad name upon their character, so this drunken revelry of the Danes in spite of all the virtues of their character and in spite of all the glories they have won by their noble and heroic deeds, spoils their good name and shows them as degraded or depraved people in the eyes of the world. It is a fact that the slightest touch of vice or evil in human nature ruins completely the grace and worth of all the virtues and noble qulities of human character just as a drop of some acid curdles a large quantity of good and fresh milk.

Enter **Ghost**

Hor. See, my Lord, the spirit appears !

Ham. May the good spirit and good saints protect us ! Whether you are a good spirit or an evil spirit, whether you are bringing the blessings of heaven or the curses of hell, whether your mission is pious or unholy, you are appearing in such a form that I must put questions to you. I will address you as my father, as the King of Denmark, and as a great hero. Let me not

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Let me not burst in ignorance ; but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements : why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped his conderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again ! What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls ?
Say why is this ? wherefore ? what should we do ?

[**Ghost** *beckons* **Hamlet**

Horatio. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Marcellus. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground :
But do not go with it.

Horatio. No, by no means.

Hamlet. It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

Horatio. Do not, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, what should be the fear ?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself ?
It waves me forth again ; I'll follow it.

Horatio. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That bettles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
And draw you into madness ? think of it ;
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

Hamlet. It waves me still.
Go on ; I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Hamlet. Hold off your hands.

Horatio. Be ruled ; you shall not go.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

have an unusual curiosity ; please let me know why your body which was duly coffined at the time of your funeral has now come out of the coffin, why the tomb in which you were buried with all due ceremonies has opened wide and has thrown you out of it, What does it signify that you, being a dead body, should revive again and visit the earth making the night dark, as it were by your shadow, and why should we be trembling with fear and our mind be completely confused ? Please explain all the reasons behind all these mysterious happenings and also advise us what we should do.

[*Ghost beckons* **Hamlet**

Hor. The Ghost seem to call you as if it wants to talk to you something in private.

Mar. Mark how politely it gives you a signal with its hand so that you may follow it to some distant place. But I would warn you not to follow it.

Hor. No, you must not go.

Ham. If do not follow it, it will not speak anything to us.

Hor. But do not follow it, my lord.

Ham. Why should I be afraid of it ? I do not attach the least value to my life : and as regards my soul, the spirit cannot do any harm to it because it is immortal and not perishable like the body. The spirit is beckoning me again, and I must follow it.

Hor. What will happen to you, my lord, if the ghost tempts you near the sea or to the top of that tall rock that is overhanging the sea and then it puts on a monstrous-looking shape to frighten your wits ? Just consider this. The very height of the place and the sight of the roaring sea below would frighten a person, even without any other factor, so much that he may go mad.

Mar. We will not permit you to go, my lord.

Ham. Take off your hands.

Hor. Listen to our advice : you must not go.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd : unhand me, gentlemen ;
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me
I say, away ! Go on : I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt* **Ghost** *and* **Hamlet**

Horatio. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Marcellus. Let's follow : 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Horatio. Have after. To what issue will this come ?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Horatio. Heaven will direct it.

Marcellus. Nay, let's follow him.
[*Exeunt*

SCENE V. *Another part of the platform*

Enter **Ghost** *and* **Hamlet**

Hamlet. Where will thou lead me ? speak ; I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Hamlet. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come.
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Hamlet. Alas, poor ghost !

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Hamlet. Speak ; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Hamlet. What ?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit ;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul freeze thy young blood.
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hairs to stand on end.
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine :
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list !
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,—

Hamlet. O God !

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnaturul murder.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. My fate is calling me, and all my veins and muscles in the body are getting tough with excitement just like those of the Nemean lion. I am still being called by the ghost. Please take off your hands from me otherwise I will kill the man on the spot whoever happens to hinder me. I say, take off your hands. I am coming, ghost ; move on. [*Exeunt* **Ghost** *and* **Hamlet**

SCENE V. *Another part of the platform*

Enter **Ghost** *and* **Hamlet**

Ham. Where are you going to take me ? Speak ; I will not go any further.

Ghost. Listen to me.

Ham. Yes, I will listen.

Ghost. It is nearly the appointed time when I shall have to return to hell when I shall be consumed by the most scorching fire.

Ham. I am really sorry for you, unfortunate ghost.

Ghost. Don't be sorry on my account but listen seriously to what I shall disclose to you.

Ham. Please speak out ; I shall positively listen to you with every attention.

Ghost. You shall have to take revenge also when you will come to know of what I shall speak out.

Ham. What do you say ?

Ghost. I am your father's spirit. I am condemned for a certain period of time to move about in the night and to be burnt in the hell fire in the day till all the sins that I committed during my youth are completely washed out. But I am not permitted to disclose any of the secrets of my life in hell ; and if I were to tell you even one syllable of my terrible experiences, it will torture your soul so much that your very blood would freeze in your veins, that your eyes would come out of their sockets like the stars going out of their orbits ; and that your hair would stand erect like the sharp bristles on the body of angry porcupine. But the mysteries of the condemned life in hell must not be disclosed to any human ear. Oh, listen to me if you ever loved your father.

Ham. Good Heavens !

Ghost. You have got to take revenge upon his most cruel and treacherous murder.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Murder !

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

Hamlet. Haste me to know't that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused ; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Hamlet. O my prophetic soul ! My uncle !

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, traitorous gifts,—
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce !—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !
From me, whose love was of that to dignity,
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage ; and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine ! But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment ; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood ; so did it mine ;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Why do you talk of murder ?

Ghost. Every murder is treacherous and cruel enough but the murder which I am going to reveal is the most cruel and treacherous murder.

Ham. Please quickly let me know of it so that I may take my revenge as swiftly as the thought of love or prayer moves.

Ghost. I am glad to find that you are ready to act. If you do not act after having heard me, you would be lazier than even the weeds that grow on the banks of the river in hell. Now, Hamlet, listen to me. It was reported that I was bitten to death by a serpent while I was sleeping in my garden ; that is how all the people of Denmark were made to believe a downright lie. But know for certain that the serpent who stung your father to death is the very person who is now the King of Denmark.

Ham. How my soul was suspicious of that ! So, uncle is the murderer !

Ghost. Yes, that fellow who is passionate like a beast, who by means of his cunning and all sorts of evil temptations seduced my wife who seemed to be a chaste and devoted woman. O Hamlet, what a fall from virtue—a fall from me who bore such an honest love to her as was pledged on the day of our marriage —a fall by which she was inclined to accept a creatute who is far inferior to me in accomplishments. A truly chaste woman can never be tempted by a person even though he may appear like a God before her, just as a passionate person, even if he were married to an angel, will stoop to feed his carnal desires by holding communion with the most depraved woman. But, stay ! I seem to feel the beginning of the dawn ; and so, I should be very brief in my account. While I was sleeping as usual in my garden in the afternoon, your uncle came stealthily to me and poured into my ears the most poisonous juice of the hebonat plant. This juice is so injurious to be human blood that the moment it comes in touch with the human body, the entire blood stream that flows through the veins and the arteries is immediately curdled just as a single drop of some acid would curdle large quantity of milk. The poisonous juice had the same effect upon my blood, and immediately my blood was curdled, and upon the whole body appeared scaly scars just like the ugly wounds of leprosy. This is how, while I was asleep,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust
All my smooth body.—
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd ;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled ;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head ;
O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible !
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, not let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught : leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once !
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And' gins to pale his uneffectual fire :
Adieu, adieu, adieu ! remember me. [*Exit.*

Hamlet. O all you host of heaven ! O earth ! what else ?
And shall I couple hell ? O, fie ! Hold, hold my heart :
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee !
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee !
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there ;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter ; yes, by heaven !
O most pernicious woman !
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain !
My tables, my tables—meet it is ! set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark ; [*Writing*
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word :
It is, "Adieu, adieu ! remember me."
I have sworn't.

Hor. } [*Within*] My lord, my lord.
Mar. }

Marcellus. Lord Hamlet !

Horatio. Heaven secure him !

Hamlet. So be it !

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I was robbed of my life, of my wife, and of my kingdom by my brother. I was murdered without being given a chance of atoning for my sins which I had committed in my youth, and without being properly sanctified by any of the religious ceremonies I was removed from this world. What a cruel and treacherous stroke indeed ! If you have any touch of human feeling in you, I am sure, you will not bear it. Do not allow the royal bed of Denmark to be soiled by the unholy communion between your mother and your uncle. But whichever way you may take your revenge, you must not touch your mother any way. Let God deal with her and let her conscience prick her as much as possible if she is really guilty of any crime. I am bidding you good-bye in haste because the glow-worm by its diminished light indicates the approach of the morning. Good-bye again but do not forget me. [*Exit*

Ham. O all the angles in heaven ! O earth ! whom else shall I invoke ? Shall I invoke hell too ? What a pity ! Let not my heart burst and my nerves grow infirm but screw me up with strength. You asked me to remember you, you unhappy ghost ; I can never forget you so long as there is memory in my troubled brain. I shall wipe out from my mind everything that is trash such as the foolish lessons I learnt from books, the words of wisdom and all other things whichever I picked up in my youth and hoarded them in my brain ; and in their place your instructions, your commands will live alone without the memory of anything else. Yes, I swear in the name of God. What a vicious woman is my mother ! How wicked is my uncle ! Let me record in my diary that even the most wicked rogue can put on the appearance of a good man. That is what I find at least in the state of Denmark.

I know you now, uncle what you are. [*Writing*

Let me remember the words "Farewell, Farewell ! remember me" I have taken a vow to remember the words.

Hor. } (*Within*) My lord, my lord.
Mar. }

Mar. (*Within*) Lord Hamlet !

Hor. (*Within*) May Heaven protect him !

Ham. Let it be so !

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. Hillo, ho, ho, my lord ! 115
Hamlet. Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.

Enter **Horatio** *and* **Marcellus**

Mar. How is't my noble lord ?
Horatio. What news, my lord ?
Hamlet. O, wonderful !
Horatio. Good my lord, tell it.
Hamlet. No ; you'll reveal it. 119
Horatio. Not I, my lord, by heaven.
Marcellus. Nor I, my lord.
Hamlet. How say you, then ; would heart of man once think it ?
But you'll be secret ?
Horatio. Marcellus. Ay, by heaven, my lord.
Hamlet. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark.
But he's an arrant knave. 124
Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.
Hamlet. Why, right ! you are i' the tight ;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part :
You, as your business and desire shall point you,
For every man hath business and desire,
Such as it is ; and for mine own part,
Look you, I'll go pray.
Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
Hamlet. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily ;
Yes, faith, heartily.
Horatio. There's no offence, my lord. 135
Hamlet. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio.
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you :
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.
Horatio. What is't, my lord ? we will.
Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.
Hor. Mar. My lord, we will not.
Hamlet. Nay, but swear't.
Horatio. In faith,
My lord, not I.
Marcellus. Nor I, my lord, in faith. 146
Hamlet. Upon my sword.
Marcellus. We have sworn, my lord already.
Hamlet. Indeed, upon my sword, Indeed.
Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. (*Within*) Hullo, hullo, my lord !
Ham. Hullo, boy ! come along, darling !

Enter **Horatio** *and* **Marcellus**

Mar. How do you feel, my noble lord ?
Hor. Is there any news, my lord ?
Ham. The news is wonderful.
Hor. Speak it out, good my lord.
Ham. No : because you are likely to disclose it to others.
Hor. I will never reveal it, my lord, I can assure you in the name of God.
Mar. I too will never reveal it, my lord.
Ham. How can you assure me when no heart of man can keep such a secret ?
Hor. } But, in the name of God, we will keep it a secret, my
Ham. } lord.
Ham. There is no rogue in Denmark who is not the worst of his type.
Hor. A ghost need not come out of its grave to tell us this.
Ham. You are perfectly right ; and so, without any further delay, I think, I should shake hands with you and depart. You should also do the same according to your wish and purpose, because everybody has his own job to do and his own will to follow. So for as I am concerned, I shall go and pray.
Hor. These words of yours, my lord, sound rather strange and mysterious,
Ham. I am sorry that my words displease you. I am really sorry.
Hor. I take no offence, my lord.
Ham. Yes, but in the name of St. Patrick, there is a good deal of offence in my words. So far as the spirit is concerned it is a real ghost and not an illusion. If you want to know what passed between me and the Ghost, you should better control your curiosity. But, my dear friends, you are scholars and soldiers ; will you give an assurance to me.
Hor. What is it about, my lord ? We shall surely keep your request.
Ham. Never tell anybody what you have seen to-night.
Hor. } My lord, we assure you that we will not tell anybody.
Mar. }
Ham. But, you must take an oath.
Hor. I swear, my lord, that I will not tell anybody.
Mar. My lord, I also swear the same
Ham. Swear by the hilt of my sword.
Hor. We have already taken an oath, my lord.
Ham. Yes, swear by my sword.
Ghost. [Beneath] Swear.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Ah, ha, boy! say,st thou so? art thou there, true penny?—
Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—
Consent to swear.

Horatio. Propose the oath, my lord.

Hamlet. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Hamlet. *Hic et ubique*? then we'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?
A worthy pioneer! Once more remove, good friends.

Horatio. O day and night, but this is wonderous strange!

Hamlet. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come,
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on,—
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumbere'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As "Well, well we know", or "We could, an if we would".
Or "If we list to speak", or "There be, an if they might",
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me: this not to do.
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Hamlet. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit [*They swear*] So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray,
The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt*

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Ah, boy, do you say like that ! My good fellow, are you there ? Look ! Do you hear the Ghost swearing from underground ? So, get ready to swear.

Hor. Tell us what we shall swear, my lord.

Ham. Swear that you will never disclose to anybody what you have seen. Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. How is it, it is here and everywhere. Then we shall change our place. Come here, sirs, and touch my sword again with your hands, and then swear that you will never tell anybody what you have heard.

Ghost. (*Beneath*) Swear.

Ham. Well spoken, you spirit underground. Can you really move about underground so quickly ? You seem to be a good miner. Good friends, let us once more shift our place.

Hor. In the name of the sun and the moon, this is really very strange.

Ham. Therefore, talk it as something which you do not know. Horatio, I should tell you that there are many mysterious things in this universe which your philosophy cannot explain. But come along and swear again that however much I may appear to be strange in words or behaviour afterwards, you must not let anybody know that you understand me or anything of my ways by making gestures with your hands or head or eyes or by uttering such words as "Well, well, we know", or "We could if we would", or "If we like to speak", or "There must be something behind it", etc. Swear not to do any of these things, and God will bless you for that. No swear.

Ghost. (*Beneath*) Swear.

Ham. Don't be impatient, restless spirit ! (*They swear*) So, gentlemen, I offer all my love to you ; and I assure you further that whatever this poor man like myself can do for you, he will not fail in doing it. Let us go together and keep absolutely quiet. Something is seriously wrong with the present time or state of affairs. What a curse it is that I was born to correct the wrong ways of the world. Come, let us go together. [*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius' house*

Enter **Polonius** *and* **Reynaldo**

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, *Reynaldo.*
Reynaldo. I will my lord.
Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.
Reynaldo. My lord, I did intend it.
Pol. Marry, well said ; very well said. Look you sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris,
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense; and finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it :
Take you, as 'twere some distant knowledge of him ;
As thus, "I know his father and his friends,
And in part him :" do you mark this, Reynaldo ?
Reynaldo. Ay, very well, my lord,
Pol. "And in part him ; but", you may say, 'not well :
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;
Addicted so and so ;" and there put on him
What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.
Reynaldo. As gaming, my lord.
Polonius. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing quarreling :
You may go so far ; but breathe his faults so quaintly,
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.
Reynaldo. But, my good lord,—
Polonius. Wherefore should you do this ?
Reynaldo. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius' house*

Enter **Polonius** *and* **Reynaldo**

Pol. Give Laertes this money and these letters' Reynaldo.

Rey. I shall do it, my lord.

Pol. Good Reynaldo, before you actually meet my son, it would be very wise on your part to make all sorts of enquiries about his conduct.

Rey. My lord, I actually thought of it.

Pol. You are right. Listen to me now, sir. You should first inquire if there are Danes in Paris, what sort of persons they are, what their means and ways of living are, where they put up, what sort of people they mix with, whether they are extravagant or not—all this information you will be able to collect by indirect means. Then you should come to know whether they know my son or not ; and if they happen to know him, you should tell them that you also know him slightly, or that you know his father and his friends. Do you understand me, Raynaldo ?

Rey. Yes, very well I do, my lord.

Pol. You should say that you know my son not intimately but to some extent, and tell them also that he is a reckless sort of youth and addicted to certain vices. You can put on him any vice you like or you can invent but not any very foul vice which may bring a slur upon his name ; take care of this only ; otherwise attribute to him all sorts of follies and frailties which are common to all young people who are free and independent.

Rey. As for example, gambling, my lord.

Pol. Yes, and such vices as drinking, playing with the sword, taking oaths frequently and picking up quarrels and also going after women. But mention his vices in such an artful manner that they may appear to be as nothing more than general defects of fiery, indisciplined, rude and rough youths.

Rey. But, my good lord, ...

Pol. Do you want to know why you should do all this ?

Rey. Yes, my lord, I would like to know that.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Polonius. Marry, sir, here's my drift ;
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant :
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working.
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence ;
"Good sir", or so, or "friend", or "gentleman",
According to the Phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

Reynaldo. Very good, my lord.

Polonius. And then, sir, does he this,—he does—
What was I about to say ? By the mass, I was
About to say something : where did I leave ?

Reynaldo. At "closes in the consequence",
At "friend or so", and "gentleman".

Polonius. At "closes in the consequence", ay, marry ;
He closes with you thus ; I "know the gentleman ;
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
Or then, or then ; with such, or such ; and, as you say,
There was he gaming, there o'ertook in's rouse,
There falling out at tennis :" or perchance,
"I saw him enter such a house of sale."
See you now ;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out :
So by my former lecture and advice
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not ?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Polonius. God be wi' you ! fare you well.

Reynaldo. Good my lord !

Polonius. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Reynaldo. I shall, my lord.

Polonius. And let him ply his music

Reynaldo. Well, my lord.

Pol. Farewell ! [*Exit* **Reynaldo**

Enter **Ophelia**

How now, Ophelia ! what's the matter ?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted !

Polonius. With what, i' the name of God ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pol. Well, sir, this is my purpose ; and I think this may serve as a means of finding out things. While you would be putting the various faults on my son in this exaggerated manner, you should be able to judge the person with whom you should be talking, and thereby find out if he has actually seen my son in any of the vices which you have just mentioned. If he knows my son, he will at once reply to you by addressing you as 'good sir' or 'friend' or 'gentleman.'

Rey. Quite right, my lord.

Pol. Then, sir, he would say this.....But what was I going to say ? Good heavens ! I was going to say something ; but where did I break off ?

Rey. You stopped at 'reply to you', and at 'good sir' or 'friend' or 'gentleman'.

Pol. Quite right ; I see now. He replies to you thus he knows my son, that he saw him on some day with such persons either gambling or getting drunk or picking up a quarrel on the game of tennis or visiting some brothel, and so on. Do you see the point now ? You can find out the truth by telling a few lies. That is how wise and prudent people like ourselves find out what we want by indirect and round-about ways. So by my advice and instruction you will be able to find out what my son is doing in Paris. Have you understood me now ?

Rey. Yes, my lord, I have understood you.

Pol. Good-bye !

Rey. Good-bye, my lord.

Pol. You should closely mark my son's ways.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. Let him carry on with his lessons on music.

Rey. I shall tell him that, my lord.

Pol. Good-bye ! [*Exit* **Reynaldo**

Prednan Krishen
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.)
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

Enter **Ophelia**

How are you, Ophelia ? What is the news ?

Oph. O my lord, I have been extremely frightened.

Pol. By what ? Tell me, in the name of God.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd
Ungarter'd and down-gyved to his ancle ;
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other ;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

Polonius. Mad for thy love ?

Ophelia. My lord, I do not know ;
But truly, I do fear it.

Polonius. What said he ?

Ophelia. He took me by the wrist and held me hard ;
Then goes he to the length of his arm ;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being : that done, he lets me go :
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem's to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Polonius. Come, go with me : I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself,
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.—
What, have you given him any hard words of late ?

Ophelia. No, my good lord ; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me,

Polonius. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him ; I fear'd he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee ; but, beshrew my jealousy !
It seems it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king :
This must be known ; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

[*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Oph. My lord, as I was doing my needle work in my chamber, Lord Hamlet appeared before me in his unbuttoned jacket, without any hat, with his stockings ungartered and his knees trembling, and wearing such miserable looks as if he came out of hell to relate something horrible to me !

Pol. Do you think he is mad for your love ?

Oph. My lord, I am not sure but I really fear it.

Pol. What did he speak to you ?

Oph. He gripped me by my wrist and then he stepped back the full length of his arm, and while doing so, he placed his other hand on his forehead in this manner and stared at me so closely as if he was going to draw a sketch of me. He stayed in this position for quite a long time after which he shook my arm a little and then nodding his head thrice he breathed a deep and sorrowful sigh which seemed to shatter his body so much as if his life would end thereby. Then he released me and turning his head over his shoulders he went out fixing his eyes all the while at me.

Pol. Come along with me. I shall try to meet the king.
This is the height of love-madness, which may lead to any kind of desperate action like any other human passion. I am really sorry to find him in this state. But did you treat him very unkindly during the past few days ?

Oph. No, my lord, not unkindly but according to your instructions I refused to admit him to my presence.

Pol. That is the real cause of his madness. I now regret that I did not study him carefully or correctly. I was afraid that he was not at all serious in his offer of love to you and naturally he wanted to ruin you. But now I blame my own suspicion. Of course, it is as much natural for old people to make wrong judgments sometimes as it is natural for the young people to commit errors in their actions. Come along, let us go to the king. This should be reported to him ; and if it is hidden from him, it may cause greater sorrow afterwards than any which can be incurred due to the anger of the king. [*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *A room in the Castle*

Enter **King, Queen, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,** *and* **Attendants**

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern !
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke wanted your Service
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so I call it, physically and mentally
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man are the same
Resembles that it was. What it should be
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him,
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of ; I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him, brought up
And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and humour, equal age.
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time : so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean, you may discover
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy. So as to find remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you : intimacy
And sure I am two men there are not living There are no other people
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you whom he likes
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile,
For the supply and profit of our hope, Satisfy our curiosity to find out
Your visitation shall receive such thanks the cause of change Hamlet
As fits a king's remembrance services duly rewarded.

Rosencrantz. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command you can command us
Than to entreaty. talker entreat us for doing any service to you.

Guildenstern. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent submit to your command
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz :
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you, attendants
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is. In presence of Hamlet.

Guil. Heavens make our presence and our practices our company and our
Pleasant and helpful to him ! services make Hamlet happy and restore
him to his normal state of mind.

Queen. Ay amen !

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,** *and some* **Attendants**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *A room in the castle*

Flourish—*Enter* King, Queen, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern *and* Attendants

King—Dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, you are welcome. We urgently sent for you partly because we wanted to see you and partly because we wanted your services. You must have heard something about the change in Hamlet because Hamlet does not appear to be mentally and physically now the same as he was before. I fail to unders and what else than the sorrow of his father's death could have brought about this change in him. As both of you are of equal age to Hamlet and as both of you have been bread and brought up together with Hamlet. I would request you both to live here with us for some time in order to keep company with Hamlet and entertain him with all sorts of recreations so that you may be ablo to find out what actually is troubling him and also that we may be able to devise some means of curing his trouble.

Queen. Good gentlemen, Hamlet has talked much about your intimacy with him, and I am sure that there are no other men in the world whose company he likes more than yours. If you are kind enough to spend your time a little with us so that you may be able to satisfy our curiosity and fulfil our own desire by finding out the real cause of the change in Hamlet, rest assured that your services will be thankfully acknowledged by the king.

Ros. Both your majesties, by virtue of your position and the power you possess, can command us rather than entreat us for doing any service to you.

Guil. Both of us here readily submit ourselves to your command by laying our services at your free disposal.

King. Thank you both, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Queen. Thank you Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. I would request you immediately to visit my son who has been changed so much. Go, some of you, attendants, and take these two gentlemen to the presence of Hamlet.

Guil. May our company and our services make Hamlet happy and restore him to his normal state of mind.

Queen. We also wish the same.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz, Guildenstern** *and some* **Attendants**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Polonius**

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Polonius. Have I, my lord ? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king :
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that ; that do I long to hear.

Polonius. Give first admittance to the ambassadors ;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in,
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main :
His father's death, and our o' erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter **Polonius**, *with* **Voltimand** *and* **Cornelius**

Welcome, my good friends !
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway ?

Voltimand. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies ; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness : whereat grieved,
That so his sickness, age and impotence,
Was falsely borne in hand, send out arrests
On Fortinbras : which he, in brief, obeys ;
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack :
With an entreaty, herein further shown,
[*Gives a paper*
That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by JKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Polonius**

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway have returned with good news, my lord,

King. You have always been the carrier of good news.

Pol. Is that so may lord ? I assure you, my good lord, that as I am devoted to God so also I am obedient to you. In my opinion, if my brain is working as faithfully as it used to do, I think, I have been able to discover the real cause of Hamlet's madness.

King. Please let me know of it ; I am eager to hear that.

Pol. Please first of all, listen to the ambassadors and then whatever I have to tell you will serve as the crowning touch to it.

King. You better do the honour of bringing them to me.

[*Exit* **Polonius**

He informs me that he has found out the real cause of your son's malady.

Queen. I doubt if it can be anything else than the death of his father and the annoyances due to our hasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall test him.

Return **Polonius** *with* **Voltimand** *and* **Cornelius**

Welcome, my good friends, tell us, Voltimand. What news you bring from the King of Norway.

Vol. Happy greetings and good wishes. In the first instance, the King of Norway immediately sent out his men to prevent his nephew from collecting soldiers because he thought in the beginning that it was all a preparation for an attack on the Poles : but afterwards when he examined the situation more carefully, he found out that the preparation was against your majesty. He felt sorry that due to his illness and old age his nephew had taken advantage of the situation, but anyhow, he issued orders for the arrest of Fortinbras who ultimately submitted to him and was rebuked by the king and who. therefore, gave the assurance that he would no longer organise any campaign against your majesty. The old king being greatly pleased offered his nephew an annual income of three thousand crowns along with the permission to use the collected soldiers against the Poles. And the king requests you, as is stated in this document (*giving a paper*), to grant Fortinbras a free passage through your kingdom for the campaign against the Poles on such terms as may be safely granted.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. It likes us well :
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
Answer and think upon this business :
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour :
Go to your rest at night we'll feast together :
Most welcome home ! [*Exeunt* **Voltimand** *and* **Cornelius**.

Polonius. This business is well ended.
My liege, and, madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is ;
Why day is day, night is night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit ;
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief : your noble son is mad.
Mad call I it ; for, to define true madness,
What is't but to be nothing else but mad ?
But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Polonius. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, ' tis true ' tis pity.
And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him, then : and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause :
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus
Perpend.
I have a daughter,—have whilst she is mine,—
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise. [*Reads*
"To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified
Ophelia,"—
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; "beautified" is a vile phrase :
but you shall hear. Thus : [*Reads*
"In her excellent white bosom, these," &c.

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her ?

Polonius. Good madam, stay awhile ; I will be faithful. [*Reads*
"Doubt thou the stars are fire ;
Doubt that the sun doth move
Doubt truth to be a liar :
But never doubt I love.
"O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers : I have not art to reckon my groans : but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it Adieu
"Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet."
This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me :
And more above, hath his solicitings,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. It pleases us well. When we shall be more at leisure, we shall read this document and give a reply to it in due course after proper consideration. In the meanwhile, we thank you for your good services. You better go and have your rest. We will feast together to-night. You are most heartily welcome home.

[*Exeunt* **Voltimand** *and* **Cornelius**.

Pol. The matter has ended quite happily. My lord and madam, to discuss what duty is or what a king should do, or to distinguish between day and night would be mere waste of time. As brevity is the essence of intelligence and as lengthy expressions are dull and artificial, I would like to be brief. Your noble son is mad ; he is nothing but mad. But let me drop that matter.

Queen. Please give us more substance than mere words.

Pol. Madam, I can assure you that I do not use any trick of expression. There is no doubt that Hamlet is mad, and it is a thing of sorrow that he is mad and it is a thing of regret that it is a fact. It is, of course, a foolish manner of stating the fact but good-bye to this form of expression which I promise I well not use anymore. Let us, therefore, believe that he is mad ; and now we shall have to find out the cause of it because madness cannot be without any reason. So the matter stands, just consider that I have a daughter, who is in my possession and who due to her sense of duty and obedience has given me this letter. Now try to understand and draw your own conclusion (*Reads*) : "To the heavenly, object of my worship—the most beautiful Ophelia"—'Beautiful is not a happy expression, but you should listen further : "In her lovely white bosom these" etc. (*Reads*).

Queen. Did Hamlet write this letter to Ophelia ?

Pol. Good madam, wait a little, I shall let you know everything. (*Reads*) "You may doubt that the stars are full of fire, that the sun moves, that truth is falsehood, but never doubt my love for you."

"O dear Ophelia, I am not good in composing verses ; I do not know how to count my sighs of grief, but then please believe me when I say that I love you most. Goodbye ! Yours ever more, my dearest lady, so long as he has boby, Hamlet." My daughter out of her sense of duty has shown me this letter and has further

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

told me of his advances at certain places and at
As they fell out by time, by means and place, certain hours.
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Received his love ? taken his love

Polonius. What do you think of me ? as a man how I should take it.

King. As of a man faithful and honourable faithful & honourable man

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think, I should do
When I had seen this hot love on the wing—hot love affair between two
As I perceived it, I must tell you that.
Before my daughter told me,—what might you, I should have done
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book, like book or desk
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb, never allowed my heart to have Peep
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;
What might you think ? No, I went round to work, started working
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak :
"Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy sphere, Above your Position
This must not be :" and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort, Keep out from Hamlet
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ! adhered to this
And he, repulsed,—a short tale to make,—briefly
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension result of this
Into the madness wherein how he raves, behaves
And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this ?

Queen. It may be, very likely. most probably

Pol. Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that—
That I have positively said "'Tis so",
When it proved otherwise ? and it proved otherwise

King. Not that I know ? know nothing of this

Polonius. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*] Take this head from body
from this, if this be otherwise : most true
If circumstances lead me, I will find positively find out
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre. however deeply hidden it may be.

King. How may we try it further ? can try it further

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him : I shall set my daughter to him
Be you and I behind an arras then ; screen
Mark the encounter : if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon, due to frustration in love turns mad
Let me be no assistant for a state, Chamberlain
But keep a farm and carters. shall resign
and take up the work of farming —

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

told me about his approaches or advances to her at certain places and at certain hours.

King. But how has she taken his love ?

Pol. What do you think I should do as a father in such a case ?

King. As a faithful and honourable man should do.

Pol. I would like to prove myself to faithful and honourable. When I had noticed this hot love affair between my daughter and Hamlet and before actually my daughter had told me anything about it, what do you think I should have done ? Do you think, your majesty the king and the queen, I kept quiet or sat idle just like a book or a desk, or do you think I never allowed my heart to have a peep into the matter, No, I took every active step and spoke to my daughter ; "Lord Hamlet is far above your position, and therefore you must not indulge in this love-affair anymore." And then, I instructed her to shut herself out from Hamlet, not admit to her presence any of his messengers, not to accept any love-present. She, of course, followed my advice, and the result was that Hamlet was rejected or thrown out. To cut short the story, Hamlet become sad ; he gave up his food and drink : he forgot his sleep ; and then, he became weak in body and also light in the head, with the result that he grew mad in which state we all find him now and for which we regret.

King. Is that your view ?

Queen. Most probably it is as he says.

Pol. Do you thing I have ever said that this is so about anything and it proved to be otherwise ?

King. I am not aware of any such case.

Pol. (*Pointing to his head and shoulder*) You may cut off my head if it does not prove to be what I have told you. If things do not go against me, I will positively find out the truth however deeply hidden it may be.

King. How can we test it further ?

Pol. You must be knowing that sometimes Hamlet walks for four hours continuously in this lobby.

Queen. Yes, he does so.

Pol. At this time I shall set my daughter on him. We shall be hiding ourselves behind the screen and watch the meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia I can assure you that if Hamlet does not love Ophelia and if he has not gone mad with love for her, I am prepared to resign my office of the Chamberlain and take up the work of farming.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. We will try it.
Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading
Polonius. Away, I do beseech you, both away :
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants*

Enter **Hamlet** *reading*

O, give me leave.
How does my good Lord Hamlet ?
Hamlet. Well, God-a-mercy.
Polonius. Do you know me, my lord ?
Hamlet. Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.
Polonius. Not I, my lord.
Hamlet. Then I would you were so honest a man,
Polonius. Honest, my lord !
Hamlet. Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.
Polonius. That's very true, my lord.
Hamlet. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter ?
Polonius. I have, my lord
Hamlet. Let her not walk i' the sun ; friend, look to't
Polonius. [*Aside*] How say you by that ? Still harping on my daughter : yet he knew me not at first ; he said I was a fishmonger : he is far gone ; far gone ; and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love ; very near this ; I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord ?
Hamlet. Words, words, words.
Polonius. What is the matter, my lord ?
Hamlet. Between who ?
Polonius. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.
Hamlet. Slanders, sir : for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards : that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum ; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down ; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.
Polonius. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.—will you walk out of the air, my lord ?
Hamlet. Into my grave ?
Polonius. Indeed, that is out o' the air.—[*Aside*]. How pregnant sometimes his replies are ! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. We shall make an experience of it.
Queen. See how Hamlet is walking sadly and reading something.
Pol. I would entreat both of you to be away from this place. I shall put questions to him.

[*Exeunt* **King, Queen** *and* **Attendants**

Enter **Hamlet**, *reading*

Please permit me to enquire about your health, my good lord Hamlet.

Ham. Well, thank God.
Pol. Do you recognise me, my lord ?
Ham. Quite distinctly ; you are a fish-seller.
Pol. No, my lord, I am not.
Ham. Then I wish that you were as honest as a fisherman.
Pol. Do you mean honest, my lord ?
Ham. Yes, sir, honesty in this world is so rare that you can hardly find one honest man out of ten thousand men.
Pol. That's perfectly right, my lord.
Ham. If the sun can breed worms in a dead dog—if the dog is good enough to be touched by the sun—have you got a daughter ?
Pol. I have, my lord.
Ham. Let her not be exposed to the sun (because who knows what the sun may breed in her). Take care of it, my friend.
Pol. (*Aside*) What do you think of this remark ? He is always thinking of my daughter ; but then, he could not recognise me at first sight ; he said that I was a fisher-man ; he is deeply in love, really speaking. I too suffered in youth much due to the infection of love from which he is suffering now. I will talk to him again. What are you reading, my lord ?

Ham. It is mere words.
Pol. But what is the subject-matter, my lord ?
Ham. Subject-matter between whom ?
Pol. I mean the subject-matter you are reading.
Ham. I am reading some scandalous material. The satirist, who must be a rogue, says that old men have grey beards, wrinkled faces, eyes that secrete some thick substance like the gum of a plum-tree, a great want of intelligence, and weak legs. All this may be true but it would not be fair to mention it. You must be as old as myself provided you could count off your years by going back in your life just like a crab that moves with back-steps.
Pol. (*Aside*) Although this looks like madness yet there is some trick behind it. Will you go out of the air, my lord ?
Ham. Yes, I will go out of the air when I will walk into my grave.
Pol. That would be really going out of the air (*Aside*). How significant sometimes his replies are ? Even most reasonable and sane persons sometimes miss what mad people often catch. I shall now leave him in order to arrange for a meeting between him and my daughter. My good lord, most humbly I am taking leave of you.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. You cannot, Sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal : except my life, except my life, except my life.

Polonius. Fare you well, my lord.

Hamlet. These tedious old fools !

Enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Polonius. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet ; there he is.

Ros. [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir ! [*Exit* **Polonius**

Guildenstern. My honoured lord !

Rosencrantz. My most dear lord !

Hamlet. My excellent good friends ! How dost thou, Guildenstern ? Ah, Rosencrantz ! Good lads, how do ye both ?

Rosencrantz. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guildenstern. Happy, in that we are not overhappy ; On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Hamlet. Nor the soles of her shoe ?

Rosencrantz. Neither, my lord.

Hamlet. Then you live in the middle of her favours. What's the news ?

Ros. None, my lord but that the world's grown honest.

Hamlet. Then is doomsday near : but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular : what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither ?

Guildenstern. Prison, my lord ?

Hamlet. Denmark's a prison.

Rosencrantz. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one ; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

Rosencrantz. We think not so, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, then, 'tis none to you for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so ; to me it is a prison.

Rosencrantz. Why, then, your ambition makes it one ; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Hamlet. O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition ; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Hamlet. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Rosencrantz. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. You cannot take anything from me except leave which I will readily grant or except my life which I would willingly give away.

Pol. Good-bye, my lord !

Ham. How boring these old fools are !

Re-enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Pol. Are you looking for lord Hamlet ? He is there.

Ros. (*To Polonius*) Good-bye, sir. [*Exit* **Polonius**

Guil. My gracious lord !

Ros. My dearest lord !

Ham. My great good friends ! How do you do, Guildenstern ! I see Rosencrantz ! How do you do, both of my good friends ?

Ros. Just as the ordinary creatures do.

Guil. We feel that we do not do unusually well that we are not the most fortunate creatures on the earth.

Ham. You are not surely the most unfortunate creatures either.

Ros. We are neither fortunate nor unfortunate.

Ham. It means that you are hanging mid-way in fortune's favour. But what is the news ?

Ros. No other news, my lord, except that the world (*i. e. all people*) has become honest.

Ham. Then, the hour for the end of the world has arrived. But your information is not correct. Let me put you further questions. What rewards do you deserve in the hands of Fortune that you should have been sent to a prison here ?

Guil. Do you call it a prison-house, my lord ?

Ham. Denmark is really a prison-house.

Ros. Then the world is also a prison-house.

Ham. It is quite a big prison-house in which there are many cells or rooms of confinement. Denmark being one of the worst cells.

Ros. We do not agree with you, my lord.

Ham. Then, it is no prison-house to you, because there is nothing really good or bad in the world—it is the mind that makes a thing good or bad. But in my eyes, Denmark is a prison-house.

Ros. Then, you must be ambitious, and it is your ambition which makes Denmark appear as too small a place for you.

Ham. Good-bye ! If I have had no bad dreams recently I could have been contented by being put even in a small nutshell and I would have considered myself as happy as a king.

Guil. Your dreams must be the dreams of ambition because the real essence of ambition is nothing but the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is nothing but a shadow.

Ros. Really speaking, I regard ambition so empty and unreal that it can be treated as the shadow of a shadow.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalan Jammu

Hamlet. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern. We'll wait upon you.

Hamlet. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Rosencrantz. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Hamlet. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a half-penny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guildenstern. What should we say, my lord?

Hamlet. Why, anything, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Rosencrantz. To what end, my lord?

Hamlet. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Rosencrantz. [*Aside to Guildenstern*] What say you?

Hamlet. [*Aside*]. Nay, then, I have an eye of you—If you love me, hold not off. Speak the truth.

Guildenstern. My lord, we were sent for.

Hamlet. I will tell you why, so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling, you seem to say so.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. If ambition is merely a shadow's shadow, all the poor people must then be regarded as solid substance while the wealthy people such as kings and heroes should be considered as the shadows of the poor people. Shall we go to the court because I cannot argue any further ?

Ros. } We shall be your attendants.
Guil. }

Ham. Nothing of the sort. I will not rank you with my other servants ; because honestly speaking, I am already attended by too many persons. But in the name of our friendship, may I like to know what has brought you to Elsinore or what you are doing at Elsinore ?

Ros. We have come just to meet you ; we have no other mission.

Ham. As I am extremely poor, I am poor also in offering thanks, and yet I thank you, although my dear friends, my thanks are not worth much. Did anybody send you to me or did you come to me of your own accord ? Did you really choose to visit me ? Tell me the truth ; come along, speak.

Guil. What should we speak, my Lord ?

Ham. You can speak anything but it must be connected with my question. Somebody sent you to me. It is clearly visible in your eyes because you are too simple to hide it. I am sure, the good king and queen have sent you to me.

Ros. For what purpose, my lord ?

Ham. You should tell me that. In the name of our old friendship, our companionship in youth, our permanent love for each other, and in the name of anything else more secret than all this, I would urge you to tell me frankly if you were actually sent to me by somebody.

Ros. (*Aside to Guil*). What do you say ?

Ham. (*Aside*) I am watching you keenly. If you have any love for me, speak the truth.

Guil. My Lord, we have been actually sent to you by somebody.

Ham. I will tell you why you have been sent to me ; before you tell me anything I will speak out the reason so that you may not feel guilty of disclosing the secrets of the king and the queen. I do not know why lately I lost all my cheerfulness, gave up all my exercises. Really I feel so much depressed at heart that this beautiful world seems to me like a dreary place ; this sky which is studded with the sun, the moon and the stars and other heavenly bodies, appears in my eyes as no better than a mixture of poisonous vapours. What a wonderful creation is man, how intelligent and skilful in all his mental powers, how beautiful and attractive in body, how virtuous in conduct, how wise in thinking, and what a beautiful thing he is, incomparable among the animals ! Yet in my eyes, this man looks like a handful of vile dust ; neither man nor woman is of any attraction to me, although from your looks I feel that you do not believe my words.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Hamlet. Why did you laugh, then, when I said "man delights not me" ?

Rosencrantz. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you : we coted them on the ways ; and hither are they coming to offer you service. 308

Hamlet. He that plays the king shall be welcome : his majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target ; the lover shall not sigh gratis : the humorous man shall end his part in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere ; and the lady shall say her mind freely or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they ? 315

Rosencrantz. Even those you were wont to take such delight in the tragedians of the city.

Hamlet. How chances it they travel ? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Rosencrantz. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation. 321

Hamlet. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city ? are they so followed ?

Rosencrantz. No, indeed, they are not.

Hamlet. How comes it ? do they grow rusty ; 325

Rosencrantz. Nay, their endeavour keeps of the wanted pace ; but there is, sir, an aiery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't : these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them,—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills ; and dare scarce come thither. 332

Hamlet. What, are they children ? who maintains 'em ? how are they escoted ? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing ? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better,—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession. 339

Ros. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides ; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy : there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ros. No, my lord, we had no such idea in our mind.

Ham. Why did you then laugh when I said that man does not attract me ?

Ros. If you do not find any interest in man, my lord, how can the actors, who are coming here, receive their encouragement from you ? We met the actors on our way, and they would be coming here to entertain you.

Ham. The actor who will play the role of the king will be welcome to me and he will have respects from me as is due to a king. The actor who will play the part of the adventurous knight will have to fight with his sword ; the one who will play the lover will be duly rewarded if he plays his part well : the actor who will take the part of whimsical character will have to act within his limits ; the actor who will play the role of the clown will make those laugh who are inclined to laughter : the actor who will play the role of the lady will have full liberty to play out her part, and her speech which will be in blank verse, must not be cut short. What kind of players are they ?

Ros. Those players in whom you used to take interest—the players of tragedies.

Ham. How is that they are now moving from place to place ? They were established in some theatre and they used to earn both money and reputation there.

Ros. I think it is due to same laws of restriction put upon the theatres that have made the actors move about like this.

Ham. Do they command the some reputation now as they used to do when I was in the city ? Are they equally popular now as before ?

Ros. No really, they are not.

Ham. How does it happen ? Have they grown stale ?

Ros. No, sir, with hard labour they are maintaining their former reputation. But there is a group of boy-actors who cry at the top of their voice upon the stage and who are loudly appreciated. This is the modern style of acting. Even the bravest persons are now afraid of visiting the public theatres because they have been disqualified by the champions of the boy-actors.

Ham. Who are these boy-actors ? Who pays them ? Who protects or maintains them ? Will they be able to follow their profession when their voice will change ? When they become just like the common players, as they are bound to be some day or the other and when they will have no means to support their position, will they not accuse the writers (the playwrights) of having misled them by making them cry against the common players ?

Ros. The common players and the boy-players are both equally to blame because they have been instigated to attract one another. For sometime the theatre managers did not accept any play unless there was a quarrel between the playwright and the boy-actors.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Is't possible ?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Hamlet. Do the boys carry it away ?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord ; Hercules and his load too.

Hamlet. It is not very strange : for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood' there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. *[Flourish of trumpets within*

Guidenstern. There are the players.

Hamlet. Gentleman, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then ; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony : let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the player, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome : but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived. *(What they think of me.)*

Guildenstern. In what, my dear lord ?

Hamlet. I am but mad / north-north-west : when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter **Polonius**

Polonius. Well be with you, gentlemen !

Hamlet. Hark you, Guildenstern : and you too ; at each ear a hearer : that great baby, you see there, is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Rosencrantz. Happily he is the second time come to them : for they say an old man is twice a child.

Hamlet. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players ; mark it. You say right, sir : o' Monday morning : 'twas so indeed.

Polonius. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Hamlet. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Polonius. The actor are come hither, my lord.

Hamlet. Buz, buz ! Keep the news to me.

Polonius. Upon my honour,

Hamlet. Then came each actor on his ass,—

Polonius. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastrol, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral scene individable or poem unlimited : Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Is it really the case ?

Guil. So many brains had been engaged in the quarrel.

Ham. Do the boy-actors come out victorious in the quarrel ?

Ros. Yes, my lord they succeed in carrying the entire victory.

Ham. There is nothing about it to wonder at because when my father was alive people used to make faces at my uncle but now they would purchase his portrait at any price because he is the King of Denmark and my father is no more in this world. There must be something deeper in all this than we can find out. [*Flourish of trumpets within*

Guil. The players have arrived.

Ham. Gentlemen, I welcome you to Elsinore. Let me have your hands and because ceremony forms a part of the welcome, so let me shake hands with you. I am afraid, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the welcome which I am extending to the players is quite different from the welcome which I have extended to you. Therefore, you are equally welcome. But then, I should tell you that my uncle, who poses to be my father, and my mother who may become my aunt now by her marriage with my uncle, are entirely mistaken in their views about me.

Guil. How, my good lord ?

Ham. I am not all mad ; and when I am not mad I can surely distinguish between things *i. e.*, between my friends and foes. When the south wind blows, I am sane and can distinguish between a hawk and a heron.

Re-enter **Polonius**

Pol. You are welcome, gentlemen.

Ham. Listen, Guildenstern, and you Rosencrantz also. Mark how the old bady (*i. e. Polonius*) has not as yet crossed the stage of his infancy !

Ros. Probably, he has arrived at his childhood again because old age is regarded as second childhood.

Ham. I predict that he has come to tell us about the players. You are right, sir ; on Monday morning ; it was really so.

Pol. My lord, I have got some news for you.

Ham. My lord, I have also got some news for you.
When Roscins was an actor in Rome.....

Pol. The players have arrived, my lord

Ham. Keep the news to yourself.

Pol. I assure you, my lord,.....

Ham. Then each actor must have come riding on ass.

Pol. They are the best actors in the world for all types of plays—tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, comical, historical pastoral, etc, in which there are long continuous scenes and plenty of verses. These actors can play the most tragic parts as also they can play the most comic parts. They are the most suitable persons for the observance or violation of any kind of theatrical rules.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou !

Polonius. What treasure had he, my lord ?

Hamlet. Why,

"One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well."

Polonius. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Hamlet. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah ?

Polonius. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Hamlet. Nay, that follows not.

Polonius. What follows, then, my lord ?

Hamlet. Why,

"As by lot, God wot",

and then, you know,

"It came to pass, as most like it was",—

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more ; for look, where my abridgment comes.

Enter **four** *or* **five Players**

You are welcome, masters ; welcome, all ; I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend ! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last ; comest thou to beard me in Denmark ? What, my young lady and mistress ; by'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see : we'll have a speech straight : come, give us a taste of your quality : come, a passionate speech.

First Player. What speech, my lord ?

Hamlet. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once ; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare to the general : but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection : but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more hand some than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter : if it live in your memory, begin at this line : let me see, let me see :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. In the name of Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a precious thing you have !

Pol. What precious thing did he have, my lord ?

Ham. Why, he had one lovely daughter whom he loved most.

Pol. (*Aside*) He is still thinking of my daughter.

Ham. Am I not correct, old Jephthah ?

Pol. If you say, I am Jephthah, my lord, I have indeed a daughter whom I love most.

Ham. No, that does not follow from it.

Pol. What does follow then, my lord ?

Ham. Why, as God knows, the next line which follows.....it came to pass, as most like it was.....is to be found in first few verses of the sacred song. But I must stop here what I was telling you because the players have interrupted me.

Enter **four** *or* **five Players**

You are welcome, gentlemen ; all of you are welcome. I am glad to see you prosperous. I extend my welcome to you, friends. O my old friend, how is it you have grown beards on your chin since I saw you last ? Do you come to Denmark to challenge me ? O my dear young lady and mistress ! In the name of Virgin Mary, you look taller than before by putting on high heeled shoes. I wish, your voice had not been broken like some obsolete coin. Gentlemen, you are all welcome. Like the French falconers, who set the hawk on anything, let us have a speech immediately. Come along, let us have some idea of your ability to act or to recite. Let us have some passionate or emotional speech.

First Player. What speech would you like to have, my lord ?

Ham. I heard you once reciting me a speech but it was not acted upon the stage more than once, as far as I remember. The play did not have an appeal to the masses ; it was not appreciated generally. But it was a good play in the opinion of those who could judge things better than myself. The play was divided into scenes and composed with sufficient skill and grace. I remember to have noticed somebody remarking that it had no sufficient humour for its entertainment, no substance in the expressions which might be regarded as affection ; but the play, on the whole, was composed with a good taste and without any touch of artificiality. I liked very much one speech in it.....the speech of Eneas to Dido in which he related the story of the killing of Priam. If you have not forgotten it, you better begin with the lines, "The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast". But no, that is not correct ; it begins with Pyrrhus :

CC-0 Agamgarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast",
—'tis not so :—it begins with Pyrrhus ;
"The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot
Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder ; roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks."
So, proceed you.

Polonius. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

First Player. "Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command ; unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide ;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for, lo ! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick :
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.
But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region : so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam. Out, Fortune ! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power ;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends !"

Polonius. This is too long.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"The dread Pyrrhus, who put on a black armour that looked dark as the night and as the dreadful purpose, when he was concealed in the fateful wooden horse, had smeared him with a colour which was more frightful than his original dreadful complexion. From the crown to the toe he is now painted with blood.....the blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons.....the streets being coated with the clop of blood, dried up by the heat of the sun, lending a cruel and unholy light to the scene of the murder of their lord. Burning with anger, encrusted all over with blood, with eyes looking like carbuncles, the wicked Pyrrhus seeks the life of the grand old man Priam."

You can now go on.

Pol. By God, you have, my lord, recited the speech quite well with correct accents and in a well regulated voice.

First Player. Soon he finds him ; he is scarcely able to strike at the Greeks ; his old-fashioned sword refused to obey him. Although Priam is no equal in strength yet Pyrrhus attacks Priam, and in fits of anger waves his sword ; the very breath of wind produced by the waving of the sword blows down the weak, old Priam. Although Troy is without feeling yet it seems to be moved by the blows and it crashes down in flames, completely bewildering Pyrrhus with the sound of the crash. Look how his sword, while coming down upon the grey head of old Priam, remains hanging in the air. So Pyrrhus stood there like a tyrant painted on a screen and could not fulfil his purpose or determination. When a storm is brewing, it often happens that there is a lull, and masses of clouds collect in the sky, the fleeting winds are quiet and the earth below breathes a dreadful silence ; but soon the thunder-storm bursts. In the same way, after a short pause the revived vengeance makes Pyrrhus active again, and his blood-stained sword falls upon the head of Priam with much greater violence and cruelty than the hammer of Cyclops ever fell upon the armour of Mars in order to make it perfectly invincible against the hardest blow. Cursed be that fortune who acted like a faithless prostitute. Let all the gods in heaven assemble in order to snatch away the power from Fortune by breaking her wheel of destiny and throwing it into hell."

Pol. It is too long a speech.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on : he's for a jig or a tale, or he sleeps : say on ; come to Hecuba.

First Player. "But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen—"

Hamlet. "The mobled queen" ?

Polonius. That's good ; "mobled queen" is good.

First Player. "Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames.
With bisson rheum ; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced :
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made—
Unless things mortal move them not at all—
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods."

Polonius. Look, whether he has not turned his colour, and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

Hamlet. 'Tis well ; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed ? Do you hear, let them be well used ; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time : after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet. God's bodykins man, much better ! use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping ? Use them after your own honour and dignity : the less they deserve : the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Polonius. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends : we'll hear a play to-morrow.

[*Exit* **Polonius** *with all the* **Players** *except the* **First**

Dost thou hear me, old friend : can you play the Murder of Gonzago ?

First Player. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. We'll ha't tomorrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not ?

First Player. Ay, my lord.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. The speech will be sent to some barber's shop along with your beard. Please go on reciting. He can appreciate a comic song on a table but not a good speech. Please go on ; now speak of Hecuba.

First Player. But, Oh, who had seen the.....muffled queen ?

Ham. What do you mean by the muffled queen ?

Pol. I like the muffled queen ; it is well said.

First Player. The muffled queen ran barefoot up and down. Her eyes were blinded with tears. She was absolutely indifferent to the burning flames. She put on a rag upon her head, instead of the crown, and a blanket in place of a robe wrapped round her shrunken buttocks which she had picked up in haste and panic. Whoever witnessed this spectacle would have cursed the power of Fortune. When the queen saw Pyrrhus cutting her husband's limbs to pieces, she gave out a loud cry of lamentation which would have deeply moved the hearts of the gods in heaven, if gods are at all moved by human sorrows, and even the stars in the sky would have shed profuse tears.

Pol. See how he has been deeply moved by the speech—his face turning pale and his eyes shedding tears. No more of this speech, please.

Ham. It is well done. I will have you recite the rest of the speech soon. My good lord, will you please see that the players are comfortably lodged ? Do you listen to me, Sir ? Let the players be properly looked after, because they are the chroniclers of the age. You should prefer to have a bad inscription on your tomb after death rathar than earn a bad name from these players while you are ~~loving~~ lives,

Pol. My lord, I will treat them just as they deserve.

Ham. In the name of God, treat them much better than they deserve. If everybody is treated just as he deserves than nobody can escape whipping. Treat them according to your own sense of honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the greater is your merit i. e. the more you deserve. Take them to their lodgings.

Pol. Come along, gentlemen.

Ham. Go with him, friends ; to-morrow we shall have the performance of a play [*Exit* **Polonius** *with all the* **players** *but the* **First**] Do you hear me, my old friend ? Can you play the Murder of Gonzago ?

First Player. Yes, my lord.

Ham. We shall have the performance to-morrow night. I think, you would be able to get by heart a speech of one dozen or sixteen lines which I shall compose and introduce into the play. Could you not do it ?

First Player. Yes, my lord.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

Rosencrantz. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' ye! [*Exeunt* **Rosen** *and* **Guil.**

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wann'd
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this, ha?
'Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
Wish this slave's offal: bloody villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a shrew, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion! Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Very well. Go along with that lord but see that you do not make any sport with him [*Exit* **First Player**]. My good friends, I am leaving you till we meet again tonight. You are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. My good lord !

Ham. Yes, good-bye to you both !

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Now I am alone. What a knave and a churl I am ! Is it not strange that this actor while playing an imaginary role and putting on a false emotion could move his mind and heart to such a condition or state that his whole face grew pale, his eyes were full of tears, his whole appearance was so much changed that his very voice became choked, and all his expressions and gestures suited so perfectly to his imaginary ? Was it all for Hecuba ? But Hecuba is nobody to him as he is nobody to her ; and so, why should he weep for her ? If he had the same cause and motive as myself, how would he play his part ? He would flood the stage with tears and rend the ears of his listeners with horrid cries ; he would drive the guilty literally mad and frighten the innocent out of their wits : he would bewilder the ignorant, and confuse the very senses of sight and hearing. But so far as I am concerned, I seem to be wanting in courage and capacity for action : I am sitting absolutely idle and merely brooding like John, the dreamer, and not instigated to action by the task to be performed. I am taking no action on behalf of a king who has been murdered and robbed of his kingdom. Am I not a coward ? I must not protest in the least if somebody calls me a rascal, or breaks my head or plucks my beard, or twists my nose, or calls me a liar most loudly in my very face. Who is doing me all these insults and injuries ? I am a great coward otherwise I should have fed the kites of the air with the flesh of this villain (*Claudius*). He is indeed a great villain, a shameless lustful, cruel villain. O vengeance, I must be really an ass, boasting of course, and taking no action when my own father has been most treacherously murdered, and when all the powers of heaven and hell are urging me to take revenge. How like a worthless woman, a kitchen-maid and a slut, I am merely uttering curses and doing nothing else ! I should feel ashamed of myself. Let me put my brain to work. I have heard that guilty

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions ;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle ; I'll observe his looks ;
I'll tent him to the quick ; if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil : and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds
More relative than this : the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [*Exit*

ACT III

SCENE I. *A room in the Castle*

Enter **King, Queen, Polonius Ophelia, Rosencrantz, *and* Guildenstern**

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy ?

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted ;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded :
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well ?

Rosencrantz. Most like a gentleman.

Guildenstern. But with much forcing of his disposition

Rosencrantz. Niggard of question ; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime ?

Rosencrantz. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way : of these we told him ;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it : they are about the court ;
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

persons have been moved to confess their crimes by seeing the performance of their crimes enacted upon the stage ; because murder must come to light somehow or other in a mysterious manner, whatever may be the efforts to hide it. I shall make these players perform a play somewhat like the murder of my father in the presence of my uncle ; I shall carefully examine the changing expressions on his face ; I shall dive deep into the secrets of his mind. If he reacts to the performance of the play and turns pale, I know what course of action I shall have to take. But the ghost I have seen may be an evil spirit. The devil often appears in an attractive form in order to influence the minds of men, particularly, the weak minds like mine : and who knows that the devil did not appear as the ghost of my father in order to mislead and ruin me ? So, I must make sure of my position before I take any steps against my uncle : the mere visit of a ghost should not be considered as sufficient ground for taking any steps. The play is the best means of exposing the guilt of the king.

ACT III

SCENE I. *A room in the castle*

Enter **King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. Can you not get out of him, by some indirect method, why he is behaving in such a disorderly manner ; why he is disturbing the quiet tenor of his life by raving and behaving rudely which looks like insanity ?

Ros. He admits that his mind is seriously disturbed but by what particular trouble he would never confess to us.

Guild. We do not find him at all ready to be examined or analysed ; but on the other hand, he keeps himself at a distance or cleverly avoids us by putting on the looks of a mad man whenever we happen to drive him almost to the point of confession of the real cause of his trouble.

Queen. Did he welcome you warmly ?

Ros. Yes, madam, perfectly like a gentleman.

Guild. But then, there was much of compulsion about his manners.

Ros. He did not talk much of his own accord but whenever we put him any question he readily answered it.

Queen. Did you try to entertain him any way ?

Ros. Madam, it so happened that we came across some players on the way : we told him about those players and he seemed to be much delighted to hear about them. They are staying in the court, and I think, they have been ordered to give their performance before him tonight.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Polonius. 'Tis most true :
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart ; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined,
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too ;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither.
That he, as 't were by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia :
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you :
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Ophelia. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit* **Queen**

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read on this book :
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much proved,—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [*Aside*] O, 'tis too true !
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience !
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word :
O heavy burden !

Polonius. I hear him coming : let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt* **King** *and* **Polonius**

Enter **Hamlet**

Hamlet. To be, or not to be : that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them ? To die : to sleep ;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pol. It is absolutely true, and he requested me to entreat your majesties to attend the performance.

King. We will attend it most gladly : and it pleases me very much to hear that he is so keenly interested in the performance. Good gentlemen, please encourge him further in all such pastimes.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. Dear Gertrude, you should also leave our company, because we have secretly sent for Hamlet here so that it may appear as if he is meeting Ophelia here by chance. Her father and myself shall conceal ourselves somewhere here and being unobserved, we shall observe their behaviour in the presence of each other : it is, of course, within our rights, being their lawful guardians. We shall be able to judge if his madness is due to his love for her or due to some other cause.

Queen. I shall act just as you will tell me. Now, Ophelia, I wish that your loveliness may be the cause of his madness and that your good qualities may bring him back to his normal state so that both of you may be restored to your honourable position.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit* **Queen**

Pol. Ophelia, you should keep on walking here. If it please your majesty, we shall conceal ourselves here. (*To Ophelia*) Go on reading this book, so that you may be taken to be lonely. We elderly people cannot escape being blamed in this particular matter, namely, that on the pretext of piety and devotion, we have sometimes to commit a wicked deed or while committing a bad deed we put on a pious form.

King. (*Aside*) Oh, how true it is indeed ! How his words make me feel the pinches of my conscience most acutely ! The face of a prostitute which is beautified with some artificial paints does not look more hideous than my own words of hypocrisy with which I try to hide my foul deed. Oh how bitterly I feel the foulness of my crime !

Pol. I hear his footsteps : let us conceal ourselves, my lord.

[*Exeunt* **King** *and* **Polonius**

Enter **Hamlet**

Ham. To live or not to live—that is the real problem. It is more heroic to bear all the calamities and misfortunes of life or to fight against them and try to conquer them ? Or is it better to commit suicide and thereby enjoy eternal sleep and a state of total forgetfulness ? By such a sleep we believe that we can put an end to all our mental worries as well as to all our physical sufferings, and we believe it also to be a desirable end. But then, even

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep
To sleep ! perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause : there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life,
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of ?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn away,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now !
The fair Ophelia ! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Ophelia. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day ?

Hamlet. I humbly thank you ; well, well, well.

Ophelia. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver : I pray you, now receive them.

Hamlet. No, not I :
I never gave you aught.

Ophelia. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did ;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich : their perfume lost,
Take these again : for to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Hamlet. Ha, ha ! are you honest ?

Ophelia. My lord ?

Hamlet. Are you fair ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

in sleep we may have ugly dreams ; and it is the thought of these fearful dreams which prevent us from committing suicide. This consideration or fear makes us bear our life of prolonged sufferings ; otherwise who would bear the contempt and insult of the world ? Who would tolerate the injustice and cruelty of the tyrant ? Who would bear the arrogance of the proud and vain people ? Who would agree to suffer the agony of unrequited love ? Who would have patience with the delay of law in dealing out justice ? Who would submit to the arrogance of the undeserving superiors and swallow the insult of going unrewarded in spite of due merits ? Who would make any compromise with all such adversities if one could put an end to all of them by merely committing suicide with a knife ? Who would care to be tortured by the burden of life if the fear about the unknown future after death did not confound his will and make him put up with all sorts of sufferings instead of venturing into an unknown world by committing suicide about which nobody knows anything ? That is how our mind is robbed of its courage and determination to die is weakened, and all our efforts to commit suicide fail. But silence now. My beautiful Ophelia, I wish that all my sins may be forgiven by your holy prayers !

Oph. My good lord, how have you been keeping all these days ?

Ham. I thank you in all humility. Well, well, what should I say in reply ?

Oph. My lord, I possess some tokens from you which I have been long thinking of returning to you. Please take them back.

Ham. No, I do not remember to have given you any such thing.

Oph. My good lord, you know quite well that you did ; and along with those tokens you gave me sweet words which made the tokens sweeter still. But now, these tokens have become meaningless, and therefore, take them back. In the eyes of noble persons, even precious gifts become worthless if the person who presents them becomes unkind.

Ham. Do you really mean what you say ?

Oph. What do you mean, my lord ?

Ham. Are you really truthful ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College, Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia. What means your lordship ?

Hamlet. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Ophelia. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty ?

Hamlet. Ay, truly ; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness : this was sometime a paradox but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Ophelia. Indeed my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet. You should not have believed me : for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it : I loved you not.

Ophelia. I was the more deceived.

Hamlet. Get thee to a nunnery : why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners ? I am myself indifferent honest ; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me : I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my back than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven ? We are arrant knaves, all : believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father ?

Ophelia. At home, my lord.

Hamlet. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

Ophelia. O, help him you sweet heavens !

Hamlet. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry : be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go : farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool : for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them To a nunnery, go : and quickly too. Farewell.

Ophelia. O heavenly powers, restore him !

Hamlet. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another ; you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go too, I'll no more on't : it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live : the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[*Exit*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Oph. I do not understand you, my lord.

Ham. If you are really just and true, your virtues should have no connection with your physical charms.

Oph. But do you think, my lord, that beauty should have no connection with virtue ?

Ham. No, it should not because beauty has the power of degrading virtue but virtue has no power of converting beauty to its own nature. Formerly, this used to be considered as a contradiction, but now it has been proved to be true. Of course, I used to love you formerly.

Oph. My lord, indeed you gave me that impression.

Ham. You should not have taken me at my word, because virtue is not so much ingrained in us that we may be inclined to like it. I did not love you.

Oph. So, I was all the more duped by you.

Ham. You better go to a convent, otherwise you would only bring forth sinful creatures into the world. I am not strictly honest, and I could confess I have committed such vices or sins that it would have been better if my mother had not given me birth at all. I am also very proud, ambitious and vindictive ; and there are even more vices and sins in my mind which I intend committing in my life ; but this is not the time or the place for their execution. Why should such sinful creatures be at all living on earth ? We are all thorough-bred scoundrels ; do not trust any of us. Better join some convent. Where is your father ?

Oph. He is at home, my lord.

Ham. Let him not get out of his house so that he may behave like a fool in his own house only, good-bye !

Oph. May the powers in heaven (**i. e. gods**) put him in his senses !

Ham. If you happen to marry, I shall give you a curse instead of a blessing as your marriage gift. You may be as pure as ice or snow, and yet you can never escape slander. Therefore, go to a convent. Good-bye ! or if you cannot do without marriage at all, better marry a fool because wise men know what fools you make of them. Go immediately to a convent. Good-bye !

Oph. O gods in heaven, give him back his senses.

Ham. I have come to know how women paint themselves (*i. e. use cosmetics*). God has given you one kind of appearance but you want to change it by using artificial things of decoration. You dance, skip, talk in an affected manner, put pet names on men and things just to mock at them, and you indulge in vices pretending all the while that you do not know what a vice is. I will have nothing to do with you anymore. You have made me mad. I declare there shall be no more marriages. Those who are already married shall be permitted to live except one person (*i.e. Claudius*) ; the rest of the people will remain unmarried. Go to a convent immediately. [*Exit.*

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
The courtier's, soldier's scholar's eye, tongue, sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite, down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh ;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy : O, woe is me
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter **King** *and* **Polonius**

King. Love ! his affections do not that way tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger : which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down : he shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute ;
Haply, the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart :
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't ?

Polonius. It shall do well : but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia !
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said ;
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please ;
But, if yold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief : let her be round with him ;
and I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so :
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go

[*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Oph. What a great mind has been completely unhinged ! He was the mark of envy of the courtier, the soldier and the scholar ; he was the dream and glory of Denmark ; he was the ideal of fashion and of good manners : he was the mark of all spectators ; but he is now completely fallen from that great height. Of all women in Denmark I am most grieved at heart because I used to feed on his sweet offers of love but now that great intellect, that profound power of reason, and that handsome glowing youthful body—all have been blasted or blighted or scattered in all directions by insanity. Alas ! what a pathetic contrast I now find between what I saw formerly and what I see now !

Re-enter **King** *and* **Polonius**

King. His emotions are not directed to love now. What he said just now was no mark of madness although his words were at random. Something is troubling his mind constantly which is the cause of his gloominess ; and I have no doubt that this may take any moment some dangerous turn, in order to prevent which I have decided to send him immediately to England to collect the payment of tribute which is due to Denmark. Possibly, the sea-voyage and also the change of climate along with other new objects in foreign countries may help to remove the gloominess of his mind which has changed his behaviour from the normal course.

Pol. It may help ; but still I believe that unrequited love is the real cause of his melancholy or mental distraction. Ophelia, you need not tell us what Hamlet spoke to you because myself and the king heard it all. My Lord, do you think fit ; but if you consider it proper, let his Queen-mother after the performance of the play meet Hamlet and enquire into the real cause of his grief ; let her put straight questions to him. And if you permit me, I want to overhear their conversation from some place of concealment. If she fails to trace the cause of his trouble, you can send him to England or confine him anywhere you think fit.

King. It will be done as you suggest. Madness in persons of high rank must not be neglected. [*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh:Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *A hall in the same*

Enter **Hamlet** *and several* **Players**

Hamlet. Speak the speech, I pray you, I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as life the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise; I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant: it out-herods Herod; pray you, avoid it.

First Player. I warrant your honour.

Hamlet. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now, this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journey-men had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

First Player. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Hamlet. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too: though in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt Player*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle*

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Players**

Ham. Please recite the speech again in the most natural manner just as I coached you ; but if you recite it too loudly as many actors do, I should prefer a town-crier (a municipal announcer) to recite the speech. While reciting the speech do not wave your hands too much in this manner but be moderate in your tone and gesture even when your emotions and passions are excited by the words of the speech. It is most shocking to me when I find a player playing the role of an old man and over-doing his part by making most boisterous gestures and loud expressions during his fits of emotion in order to please those of the audience who occupy the ground seats and who are fond of such noisy speeches or nonsensical dumb-shows. I would like to get such actors severely punished who try to overdo the parts played by the characters in the old mystery plays. Please do avoid such overdoing in your part.

First Player. I assure you, we will, my lord.

Ham. Do not be too flat or uninspiring. Follow your own sense of judgment. See that action suits word and word suits action. Anyhow, you must always keep within the limits of moderation. because overdoing a part is opposed to the rules of acting, because the aim of acting was formerly and is also at present to reflect vividly the state of nature and to bring out in vivid colours the good as well as the bad qualities of men and things just as they are found in the actual world. When a certain part is overdone or underdone it amuses the ignorant audience but it shocks the wise spectator, whose opinion in the matter should count. I have seen players, who are praised unjustly, but who cannot speak even like a Christian or a pagan or a man. I have heard such players making a swaggor upon the stage and shouting in such a manner that they do not appear to have been made by nature at all but by some of her hired men who have neither the skill nor the quality of human beings.

First Player. I think, sir, we have improved that to some extent.

Ham. But try to remove the defects altogether. See that the actor who plays the role of the clown does not go beyond the limit of his speech. There are clowns who laugh themselves in order to make some of the foolish audience laugh, particularly when there is some serious situation arising. This is really most wicked on the part of the clown who is ambitious of popularity. Now go and make ready the performance of the play. [*Exeunt* **Players**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Polonius, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

How now, my lord ! will the king hear this piece of work ?

Polonius. And the queen too, and that presently.

Hamlet. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit* **Polonius**

Will you two help to hasten them ?

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern. We will my lord.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Hamlet. What, ho, Horatio !

Enter **Horatio**

Horatio. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Hamlet. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Horatio. O, my dear lord,—

Hamlet. Nay, do not think I flatter :
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee ? Why should the poor be flatter'd
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear ?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself : for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks : and bless'd are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee—Something too much of this.—
There is a play to-night before the king ;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death :
I prithee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle ; if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note :
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face
And after, we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by:IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Polonius, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

What do you say, my lord ? Will the king attend the performance of the play ?

Pol. The queen is also attending the performance and they would be coming soon. [*Exit* **Polonius**

Ham. Ask the players to be ready without any delay.

Ros. } We will, my lord.
Guil. }

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Ham. Is that Horatio ?

Enter **Horatio**

Hor. Here, my lord, I am at your services.

Ham. Horatio, you are the most honest man I ever talked to in my life.

Hor. O, my dear lord, you are flattering me.

Ham. No, I am not flattering you. How can I flatter you when I know that I cannot receive any material gain from you because you possess nothing except your virtues. Let the tongue of a flatterer humour a man of wealth and position ; let him kneel down before him in order to receive some favour or gain. Do you listen ? Ever since my mind developed the power of distinguishing between persons, it selected you as the ideal man, because you are a person who never cared for suffering and who bore equally the fortunes and misfortunes of life. Blessed are those persons in whom passion and reason are well-balanced so that they feel neither overjoyous nor overdepressed by the changes of fortune. Show me a person who is not overpowered by his passion, and I will cherish such a person in my heart of hearts as I cherish you. I should not talk much in this manner. A play is going to be performed to-night before the king. One scene of this play resembles the scene of my father's death as I have related to you already. When that scene appears upon the stage please observe my uncle very critically. If that one speech in that scene does not at once bring out the secret guilt of my uncle then I shall believe that the ghost we have seen is an evil spirit of hell and that my imagination is also diseased or confused just like the workshop of Vulcan, the blacksmith of hell. Watch him very carefully, and I shall also keep my eyes constantly fixed on his face so that afterwards we may compare our notes in order to draw our conclusions.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. Well, my lord : 85
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Hamlet. They are coming to the play ; I must be idle ; Get you a place.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter **King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,** *and others*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet ? 90

Hamlet. Excellent, faith ; of the chameleon's dish : I eat the air, promise crammed : you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet ; these words are not mine.

Hamlet. No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say ? 96

Polonius. That did I, my lord ; and was accounted a good actor.

Hamlet. And what did you enact ?

Polonius. I did enact Julius Caesar ; I was killed i' the Capital ; Brutus killed me. 101

Hamlet. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready ?

Rosencrantz. Ay, my lord ; they stay upon your patience,

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me. 105

Hamlet. No, good mother ; here's metal more attractive.

[*Lying down at* **Ophelia's** *feet.*

Polonius. (*To The King*) O, ho ! do you mark that ?

Hamlet. Lady, shall I lie in your lap ?

Ophelia. No, my lord. 110

Hamlet. I mean, my head upon your lap ?

Ophelia. Ay, my lord .....You are merry, my lord.

Hamlet. Who, I ?

Ophelia. Ay, my lord !

Hamlet. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry ? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Ophelia. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord. 119

Hamlet. So long ? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens ! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet ? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year ; but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then ; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is, "For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot." 126

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Gujrat

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. That is good, my lord. I am prepared to pay the penalty if the king can escape for a moment my keen observation.

Ham. They are now coming to the play. I must look indifferent. Find out some seat for yourself.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter **King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern** *and other Lords attendant with the guards carrying torches.*

King. How is my cousin Hamlet doing ?

Ham. Surely, quite well just as a chameleon that feeds on air. I am fed on mere promises which cannot keep a fowl alive.

King. I have no concern with such a reply, Hamlet. Such words are not provoked by my question.

Ham. No, my words are also not mine. (To Polonius) My lord. you said, you played once in the university. Isn't it ?

Pol. Yes, I did, my lord, and I was regarded a good player.

Ham. What part did you play ?

Pol. I played the part of Julius Caesar. I was murdered in the Capital. Brutus murdered me.

Ham. It was really most cruel to kill such an excellent calf. Are the players ready ?

Ros. Yes, my lord, they are waiting for your orders.

Queen. Come along, my dear Hamlet ; take your seat by my side.

Ham. No, thank you, mother ; here is something more tempting (*i. e. Ophelia*).

Pol. (*To the King*) Do you notice that ?

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap ?

[*Lying at Ophelia's lap*

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, I want to place my head in your lap.

Oph. Yes, my lord.

Ham. Do you think, I was behaving like a rustic ?

Oph. You are in a playful mood, my lord.

Ham. Am I really ?

Oph. Yes, my lord.

Ham. Upou God, I am merely a stage clown. What else should a man do except being playful ? See how cheerful my mother looks although my father died only two hours ago.

Oph. No, your father died four months ago.

Ham. So long ago ? then let the devil wear black mourning gown; I will wear a furred suit. O God, he died two months ago and yet he is not forgotten ? Then there is some chance that a great man will be remembered half a year after his death. But by Virgin Mary, if he does not build churches, he will be forgotten after his death just as the hobby-horse in the old May games is dropped or forgotten according to its epitaph.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters

Enter a King *and a* Queen *very lovingly; the* Queen *embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the* King's *ears, and exit. The* Queen *returns; finds the* King *dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three* Mutes, *comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the* Queen *with gift: she seems loth and unwilling a while, but in the end accepts his love.* [*Exeunt*

Ophelia. What means this, my lord?

Hamlet. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

Ophelia. Belike this show imports the argument of the play. 131

Enter **Prologue**

Hamlet. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Ophelia. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Hamlet. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means. 135

Ophelia. You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. 139

[*Exit*

Hamlet. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Ophelia. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Hamlet. As woman's love.

Enter a **King** *and a* **Queen**

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground, 145
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon 150
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must: 155
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear; 160
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters

Enter a king and a queen very lovingly ; the queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and places his head upon her neck : lays him down upon a bank of flowers : she seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the king's ears and exit. The queen returns : finds the king dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the queen with gift : she seems loath and unwilling a while, but in the end accepts his love [*Exeunt*

Oph. What is the significance of this show, my lord ?

Ham. By Virgin Mary, it is a mischievous play.

Oph. Possibly the show suggests the theme of the play.

Enter **Prologue**

Ham. This fellow will tell us everything. The players cannot conceal anything ; they will tell us everything.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show really means ?

Ham. He will explain any show you will see.

Oph. You don't know anything. You don't know anything ; I will watch carefully.

Prologue. As for the players and the play we are presenting we appeal to you for your patient hearing. [*Exit*

Ham. Is this a prologue or merely the motto of a ring ?

Oph. It is too short, my lord.

Ham. Just like woman's love.

Enter two players, **King** *and* **Queen**

P. King. Full thirty times the sun hath moved in his chariot round the earth and the sea and thirty dozen moons with their borrowed light have gone round the world thirty dozen times since we were united in love and marriage.

P. Queen. May the sun and the moon go as many times again round the earth before our love comes to an end. And alas ! you have recently been so sick that you lost your former healthy cheerfulness, and I am worried very much on this account. But your sickness should not perturb you because so far as woman is concerned, her love and fear go together (*i. e.*, the more she loves, the more she worries about her love) so that these two things (*i. e.*, love and fear) are found in an unusual degree. Time has proved how much I love you and also how proportionate my anxiety is about my love. Deeper the love, greater the fear. When little fears grow great, they prove great love.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

P. King. Faith, I must leave thee, love and shortly too ;
My operant powers their functions leave to do
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, beloved ; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

P. Queen. O, confound the rest !
Such love must needs be treason in my breast ;
In second husband let me be accurst !
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

Hamlet. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances, that second marriage move,
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love :
A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe you think what now you speak ;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity ;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortunes, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies,
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
For who not needs shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run,
That our devices still are overthrown ;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :
So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by KS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

P. King. I shall leave you soon, my darling. My active powers are failing, but you will survive me and will secure love and respect, and you may get a husband again as loving as myself...

P. Queen. For God's sake, don't speak of it any further because in my eyes such love is nothing but treachery. Let me be cursed if I marry again. No woman marries again except she who kills her first husband.

Ham. (*Aside*) How bitter it must be !

P. Queen. The motive behind a second marriage is not love but mercenary consideration. No, I will never marry again, for when my second husband would kiss me in bed I would be killing my first husband a second time.

P. King. I believe, you mean what you are saying now ; but we often do not act according to what we resolve to do. Our intention is determined by our memory. We form our intention without any consideration but on a sudden impulse ; and therefore our determination is too weak to last long. Unripe fruits stick on to the tree, ripe fruits drop on the ground. Similarly, our intention, which is formed impulsively, is quickly forgotten. It, therefore, follows that we forget to perform what is our duty because what we resolve to do under an impulse of the moment is forgotten just as our impulse grows weaker or dies away completely. Too much of joy or sorrow produces no action. Joy bursts into boisterous enjoyment while grief leads to excessive mourning. By mere accident grief turns into joy and joy into grief. This world is not everlasting, and therefore, it is not unnatural that love should change according to circumstances. Nobody can definitely say that love governs destiny or destiny governs love. When a great man loses his power and fortunes, everybody leaves him. When a poor man gains in power and wealth, his very enemies become his friends ; and in this particular sense, fortune governs love. He who does not want friends would always have plenty of friends. He who tests an untrue friend in his moment of need will immediately turn him into his enemy. Let me conclude just as I began. Our will and fate are opposed to each other so that what we intend to do or wish to have is never accomplished or won. We may have various kinds of wishes or dreams, but then, their fulfilment is not in our hands. So, at present, you may think that you will never marry again, but this determination or wish will melt away the moment you will lose your first husband.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light !
Sport and repose lock from me day and night !
To desperation turn my trust and hope !
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy,
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

Hamlet. If she should break it now

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile ;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps*

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain ! [*Exit*

Hamlet. Madam, how like you this play ?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Hamlet. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence in't ?

Hamlet. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest ; no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play ?

Hamlet. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how ? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna : Gonzago is the duke's name ; his wife, Baptista : you shall see anon : 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what o' that ? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not : let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter **Lucianus**

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Ophelia. You are as good as chorus, my lord.

Hamlet. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dollying.

Ophelia. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Hamlet. Begin, murderer ; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come ; "the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."

Lucianus. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing ;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's, ears*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE(2025)-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

P. Queen. Let me not get any food from earth or any light from heaven ; let me lose all my mirth and rest ; let my hope and faith turn into despair ; let me live on an anchorite's (hermit's) food and let me live in a prison-house : let all sorrows and misfortunes ruin all my joys and happiness ; and let me have no peace of mind but on the other hand let me suffer from all sorts of conflict and discord if ever I marry again after once I have become a widow.

Ham. If she should go back upon her vow now !

P. King. You have taken a solemn vow. Darling, please let me alone for a short time. I am feeling sleepy and I would like to forget my weariness in sleep. [*Sleeps*

P. Queen. May you enjoy sound sleep and may never any mishap separate us from each other ! [*Exit*

Ham. Madam, how do you like this play ?

Queen. In my opinion, the lady goes too far in taking such a solemn oath.

Ham. But, I am sure she will honour her oath.

King. Have you listened to the main subject of this play ? Is there nothing objectionable about it ?

Ham. No, no, they are doing all this in jest and even committing murder in jest ; there cannot be any objection to such ways in the world.

King. What is the title of the play ?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Should I explain the title ? It is a figurative title. This play is in imitation of a murder committed in Vienna ; Gonzago is the name of the Duke : his wife's name is Baptista. You will soon see that it is a play of villainy. But how does it affect us when your majesty and ourselves have no guilty conscience ? It does not concern us at all. Let those who are guilty feel the pinch but we are free from such pinching.

Enter **Lucianus**

This person's name is Lucianus, who is a nephew of the king.

Oph. You seem to be as good as the chorus, my lord, while explaining the play.

Ham. I could explain equally well your love-affairs in a puppet show.

Oph. You are really very sharp, my lord, in making a mockery of things.

Ham. Now, start your job, murderer ; stop making faces and start your job ; the raven is croaking and giving a signal for the murder.

Luc. My thoughts are murderous, my hands are ready ; the poison is also potent ; the hour is favourable ; nobody is watching. You potent poison, made out of herbs collected at midnight with the curse of Hecate (the head of witches) blessing the poison ; exercise your magic effect upon the healthy life without any delay.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's e o*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago : the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian : you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Ophelia. The king rises.

Hamlet. What, frighted with false fire !

Queen. How fares my lord ?

Polonius. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light : away !

All. Lights, lights, lights !

[*Exeunt all except* **Hamlet** *and* **Horatio**

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play ;
For some must watch, while some must sleep :
So runs the world away. Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers,—If the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,—with two provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir ?

Horatio. Half a share.

Hamlet. A whole one, I. a full player.
For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here
A very, very—pajock (worthless man).

Horatio. You might have rhymed.

Hamlet. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive ?

Horatio. Very well, my lord,

Hamlet. Upon the talk of the poisoning ?

Horatio. I did very well note him.

Hamlet. Ah, ha ! Come, some music ! come, the recorders
For if the king like not the comedy,
Why, then, belike—he likes it not, perdy.
Come, some music !

Re-enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Guil. Good, my, lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Hamlet. Sir, a whole history.

Guildenstern. The king, sir,—

Hamlet. Ay, sir, what of him ?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered.

Hamlet. With drink, sir ?

Guildenstern. No, my lord, with choler.

Hamlet. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor ; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into more choler.

Guildenstern. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. He poisons him in the garden for his property. His name is Gonzago ; the story is still current ; it is composed in good Italian. You will soon see how the murderer wins the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king leaves his seat.

Ham. How is it, the king is alarmed to see a mere show ?

Queen. How are you feeling, my lord ?

Pol. Better stop the play.

King. Lend me some light, I want to be away.

Pol. Lights, lights, lights !

[*Exeunt all but* **Hamlet** *and* **Horatio**

Hamlet. The wounded deer will go into the bush and shed tears while unwounded deer will play. It is the lot of some to keep awake while it is for others to sleep. That is how the world goes on. Do you not think that even if my fortune does not favour me, this play which I have composed, a bunch of feathers and two flower buttons on my glossy shoes would be sufficient to entitle me to be one of the players ?

Hor. You will be entitled to be half a player.

Ham. No, I say, a full player. O my dear Damon (friend), you know that Jove (my father) was robbed of his kingdom and in his place a worthless fellow occupies the throne.

Hor. You could compose verses.

Ham. My good Horatio, I am prepared to value the Ghost's words as most precious. Did you notice the King's behaviour ?

Hor. Very carefully, my lord.

Ham. Did you notice how he reacted to the scene of poisoning ?

Hor. Come, let us have some music. Let us call the recorders. If the King does not like music it does not matter. Let us have some music.

Re-enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Guild. My good lord, pray permit me to speak a word to you.

Ham. You can speak any number of words.

Guil. The King, Sir.....

Ham. Yes, Sir ; what is the matter with the king ?

Guil. The king is in a very bad mood since he left the play.

Ham. Is it due to drinking, sir ?

Guil. No, sir, it is due to anger.

Ham. You should have been wiser to refer the case to some physician ; because if I were to treat his malady, he would grow more angry.

Guil. My good lord, please do not talk in such an incoherent manner but answer my question to the point.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. I am tame, sir : pronounce.

Guildenstern. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Hamlet. You are welcome.

Guildenstern. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment : if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Hamlet. Sir, I cannot.

Guildenstern. What, my lord ?

Hamlet. Make you a wholesome answer ; my wit's diseased : but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command ; or, rather, as you say, my mother : therefore no more, but to the matter : my mother, you say,—

Rosencrantz. Then thus she says ; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Hamlet. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother ! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration ?

Rosencrantz. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Hamlet. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us ?

Rosencrantz. My lord, you once did love me.

Hamlet. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Rosencrantz. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper ? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Hamlet. Sir, I lack advancement.

Rosencrantz. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark ?

Hamlet. Ay, sir, but "While the grass grows,"—the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter **Players** *with recorders*

O, the recorders : let me see one. To withdraw with you :—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil ?

Guildenstern. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Hamlet. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe ?

Guildenstern. My lord, I cannot.

Hamlet. I pray you.

Guildenstern. Believe me, I cannot.

Hamlet. I do beseech you.

Guildenstern. I know no touch of it, my lord.

CC-0 Agamdigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. I submit to you ; now let me know what I should do.

Guil. The queen, your mother, is in a very unhappy mood ; and that is why she has sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Good my lord, this is not the proper way of receiving me. If you do not give me any proper reply ; I will not convey to you your mother's command, but on the other hand, I will beg your pardon and go away.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What do you mean, my lord ?

Ham. I cannot give you a proper answer. My brain is not in perfect health. You will get only such a reply as I can make or as my mother demands. Therefore, no waste of words but come to the point. What does my mother say ?

Ros. She says that your behaviour has bewildered her.

Ham. He must be a wonderful son who can bewilder his mother. But is there anything else next to my mother's bewilderment ? Tell me that.

Ros. She wants to talk to you in private chamber before you go to sleep.

Ham. I shall obey her even if she were ten times my mother. Have you anything else to do with me ?

Ros. My lord, you used to love me formerly.

Ham. By these hands of mine I swear that I love you even now.

Ros. My good lord, what is the cause of your malady ? If you do not confine your sorrows to your friends, you would be depriving yourself of your own liberty.

Ham. Sir, I am not granted what is my due.

Ros. How is it possible when the king himself has given you the assurance that you will be the king of Denmark after death.

Ham. But you know, sir, the proverb....."while the grass grows," —although it is an old proverb.

Re-enter **Players** *with recorders*

I am so glad to find that the recorders have been brought. Let me have a look at them. Let us get away from here..... Why do you try to take out the secret from me ? Do you want to lead me into a trap ?

Guil. My lord, it is simply because of my sense of duty that I am a little too impatient and also too rude.

Ham. I don't follow what you say. Will you play upon this pipe ?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I request you most earnestly.

Guil. Trust me I cannot.

Ham. I earnestly request you.

Guil. I have not the least idea of how to handle it, my lord.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. 'Tis as easy as lying : govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guildenstern. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony ; I have not the skill.

Hamlet. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me ! You would play upon me ; you would seem to know my stops ; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery ; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass ; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter **Polonius**

God bless you, sir !

Polonius. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Hamlet. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel ?

Polonius. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Hamlet. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius. It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet. Or like a whale ?

Polonius. Very like a whale.

Hamlet. Then will I come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

Polonius. I will say so.

Hamlet. By and by is easily said.

[*Exit* **Polonius**

Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt all but* **Hamlet**

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world : now could I drink hot blood
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft ! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :
Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
I will speak daggers to her, but use none
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never my soul consent !

[*Exit*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. It is as easy as telling lies. Regulate these openings with all your fingers and then put breath into it,.....it will give out most excellent music. Just see, these are the keys.

Guil. But I cannot finger them to produce music. I possess no knack for it.

Ham. Do you then take me to be a much inferior instrument to this know my secret keys, that you expect to draw out the secret of my heart, and that you want to produce any kind of note of music i. e. you want to handle me in any way you like. There is much of music in this pipe but say that you cannot bring out its music. Do you think, I can be more easily played upon than a pipe ? You can take me to be any instrument you like but you cannot play upon me i. e. handle me any way you like, although surely you annoy me.

Re-enter **Polonius**

May God bless you, sir !

Pol. My lord, the queen wants to speak to you and that immediately.

Ham. Do you see that cloud which looks almost like a camel ?

Pol. To be sure, it looks like a camel.

Ham. I think, it looks like a weasel.

Pol. Yes, sir, it has the back of a weasel.

Ham. Or does it looks like a whale ?

Pol. Yes, quite like a whale.

Ham. Then I shall visit my mother soon. They want to make the worst fool of me. I am coming immediately.

Pol. I will report just as you say. [*Exit* **Polonius**

Ham. I have said, 'Soon'. That's sufficient, you may go my friends. [*Exeunt all but* **Hamlet**

It is now the weird moment of the night, when graveyards open wide and hell gives out its foul infection to the world. Now I could get intoxicated by drinking hot blood of somebody and commit a deed at which broad-daylight would shudder. But let me be patient. Let me first visit my mother. Let my heart not lose its natural softness ; let not the cruelty of Emperor Nero enter my heart : let me be unkind but not cross the limits of naturalness. I will be very cruel in my words to her but not in action, So, my tongue will not reflect what is in my heart I may hurt her with my tongue but will do no violence with my hands. [*Exit*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE III. *A room in the same*

Enter **King, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you :
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you :
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
Out of this lunacies.

Guildenstern. We will ourselves provide
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.

Rosencrantz. To single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from noyance ; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. That cease of majesty
Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's near it with it : 'tis a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Ne'er alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage :
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern. We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Enter **Polonius**

Polonius. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him home :
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege :
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE III *A room in the castle*

Enter **King, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. I do not like him (Hamlet). It is not safe for us to allow his madness to go on raging like this. Therefore get ready to receive a commission (authority) from me to take him to England along with you. The condition of our kingdom will not bear the risk of his madness which is getting from bad to worse every hour.

Guil. We will arrange for our journey to England. It is a sacred fear which is prompting you to take this action in order to ensure the safety of so many people who depend upon your majesty.

Ros. It is the duty of every human individual to protect himself against any danger that threatens hie life. It is much more important duty for a person on whose safety the lives of so many people depend. When the king perishes all others also perish along with him because the king is just like a huge wheel, fixed upon the top of a high mountain, and his subjects are like its spokes ; and when that wheel breaks down, all that is connected with it, must also break down. The king never suffers alone but with his suffering is closely associated the sufferings of his subjects.

King. You must quickly get ready for the voyage because the person, who is the cause of our fear, must be put under restriction so that he may not move about freely.

Ros.
Guil. } We shall get ready as quickly as possible.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Enter **Polonius**

Pol. My lord, he is meeting his mother in her private chamber. I shall hide myself behind the screen in order to hear their conversation. I am sure, she will talk to him in such a manner that he will not be able to get out *i. e.* he will have to confess everything. You said wisely that somebody else should overhear the talk between the mother and the son so that he may be able to judge the case impartially, because otherwise the mother may be partial to the son. Good-bye, my lord, I shall meet you again before you go to sleep and report to you what I have heard.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* **Polonius.**

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven :
It hath the primal eldest curses upon't,
A brother's murder ! Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will
My stronger guilty defeats my strong intent ;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow ? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence ?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down ? Then I'll look up :
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn ? "Forgive me my foul murder"
That cannot be ; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence ?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law : but 'tis not so above ;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature ; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then ? what rests ?
Try what repentance can : what can it not ?
Yet what can it when one can not repent ?
O wretched state ! O bosom black as death
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged ! Help, angels ! Make assay :
Bow stubborn knees ; and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe
All may be well.

[*Retires and kneels*

Enter **Hamlet**

Hamlet. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying ;
And now I'll do't : and so he goes to heaven ;
And so am I revenged : that would be scann'd :
A villain kills my father ; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread ;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation Chandigarh.Funding by IKS MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. Thanks, my dear lord. [*Exit* **Polonius**

Oh, my guilt is heinous, and it is detestable in the eyes of God ; it has the touch of murder committed for the first time by a brother upon a brother (i. e. Cain murdered Abel). I am a unable to pray, although I have a strong desire to do so. My acute consciousness of guilt kills my strong determination to pray. Like a man, with two jobs in hand, who does not know which one to do first and who therefore fails to do either, so also I am at a loss to know where I should begin and where I should end, with the result that I am unable to take any action. If this hand of mine is coated deep with the blood of my brother, is there not sufficient rain in the clouds to wash it clean ? What is the use of God's mercy if it cannot face or wash off sin ? The use of prayer is either to warn and guard against sin or to grant forgiveness when the sin has already been committed. If I look up to God in prayer, will my sin be forgiven ? But what kind of prayer should I offer ? Should I say to heaven ; "Forgive the foul murder I have committed ?" That cannot be done because I am still enjoying all the fruits of my crime—the crown, the power to rule, and the queen. Can a sinner be forgiven when he retains all the benefits gained by the commission of a crime ? In a corrupt world in which we live, justice can be purchased with money or personal influence, and crime can go unpunished, and besides, all that is gained by the commission of a crime is not also confiscated by law. But the case is different in heaven. There is no escape from the penalties of crime because in heaved the crime stands exposed and we have to pay the full penalty, acknowledging or confessing and the details of our crime. What is to be done then ? Should I repent because repentance can work wonders ? But what can repentance do when one cannot repent ? My heart is so black i. e. sinful that it is incapable of repentance. My soul is so much dipped in sin that the more it tries to get out of it, the more it is entangled. Let angels help me. Let me try to pray. Let my rigid knees bend down and steel hard fibres of my heart be softened like the nerves of a new-born baby. Let all be well !

[*Retires and kneels*

Enter **Hamlet**

Ham. Now that he is praying I can easily kill him. But if I kill him now, he goes straight to heaven because he is praying to God, and so, my revenge will remain unfulfilled. I should better examine the whole position. A scoundrel kills my father, and I, the only son of my father, send this scoundrel to heaven while taking revenge upon him. This would be no revenge at all but doing him service just as a man when he is hired for committing a crime is paid some reward. Then again he murdered my father most cruelly when my father was young and before he could not seek forgiveness for the sins he had committed in his youth. Nobody

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;
And how is audit stands who knows save heaven
But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him : and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul
When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?
No.
Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent :
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage ;
At gaming swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't :
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays :
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

[*The* **King** *rises and advances*

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[*Exit*

SCENE IV. *Another room in the same*

Enter **Queen** *and* **Polonius**

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him :
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll scorce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. (*Within*) Mother, mother, mother !

Queen. I'll warrant you ;
Fear me not : withdraw, I hear him coming.

[**Polonius** *goes behind the arras*

Enter **Hamlet**

Hamlet. Now, mother, what's the matter ?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Hamlet. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Hamlet. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet !

Hamlet. What's the matter now ?

Queen. Have you forgot me ?

Hamlet. No, by the rood, not so :
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife ;
And—would it were not so !—you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

knows what account he will have to give to God for his sins but as far as we can judge his penalty will be quite heavy because he had committed many youthful sins. Shall I be able to take proper revenge upon my uncle if I kill him while he is praying to God and seeking God's forgiveness for his crimes ? No. Therefore, let my sword be used against his at a more fitting youthful moment when he would be found heavily intoxicated with wine or in most violent fits of anger or when he is indulging in unlawful sexual pleasures or when he is gambling, swearing or doing something else which cannot secure any forgiveness from God. Let my sword kill him at such moments so that instead of going to heaven he may go to hell. My mother is waiting for me. The patience which I show will only prolong his days of sin. [*Exit*

King. (*Rising*) The words I utter in prayer are lost in the air while my thoughts are confined to the earth. Mere words of prayer without any repentant feeling or mood cannot secure any forgiveness from God. [*Exit*

SCENE IV. The Queen's Closet

Enter **Queen** *and* **Polonius**

Pol. He will come immediately. Please see that you tell him everything plainly. Tell him that his mad tricks have gone beyond the limits of toleration and that your kindness has so far protected him from severe consequences. I shall keep myself concealed behind the arras. Please tell him everything plainly.

Ham. (*Within*) Mother, mother, mother !

Queen. I assure you, I shall do my duty. Please withdraw yourself because I hear his footsteps approaching.

[**Polonius** *hides behind the arras*

Enter **Hamlet**

Ham. Now, mother what is the matter ?

Queen. Hamlet, you have seriously displeased my father.

Ham. Mother, you have also seriously displeased my father.

Queen. I tell you, Hamlet, you are giving a vague reply.

Ham. I also tell you, mother, you are putting a wicked question.

Queen. What do you mean, Hamlet ?

Ham. What is wrong with you, mother ?

Queen. Have you forgotten what I am to you ?

Ham. By the holy cross, surely not. You are the queen and the wife of your husband's brother. And you are my mother, though I wish you were not.

Queen. If you do not speak properly, I will ask those persons who can make you speak.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Come, come, and sit you down ; you shall not budge ;
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do ? thou wilt not murder me ?
Help, help, ho !

Pol. [*Behind*] What, ho ! help, help, help !

Hamlet. [*Drawing*] How now ! a rat ? Dead for a ducat, dead !
[*Makes a pass through the arras*

Polonius. [*Behind*] O, I am slain ! [*Falls and dies*

Queen. O, me, what hast thou done ?

Hamlet. Nay, I know not :
Is it the king ?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this ?

Hamlet. A bloody deed ! almsot as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king !

Hamlet. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.
[*Lifts up the arras, and sees* **Polonius**

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell !
I took thee for thy better : take thy fortune ;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands : peace ; sit you down,
And let me wring your heart : for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff :
If damned custom have not brass'd it so,
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen What have I done that thou darest wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me ?

Hamlet. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths : O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words : heaven's face doth glow ;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud and thunders in the index ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Don't try to bully me. Better sit down quietly. I will not allow you to move an inch till I hold up a mirror before you in which you can see your real character.

Queen. What are you going to do ? Are you going to murder me ? Help, help, ho !

Pol. (*Behind*) What, ho ! help, help !

Ham. (*Drawing*) What is that ? A rat ? Dead, I am sure.

[*Makes a pass through the arras*

[*Falls and dies*

Pol. (*Behind*) Oh, I am killed !

Queen. Alas ! what have you done ?

Ham. I don't know. Is it the king ?

Queen. What a hasty and bloodly deed you have committed ?

Ham. Do you call it a bloodly deed ? Good mother, it is probably as foul a deed as murdering a king and marrying his brother.

Queen. What do you mean ?

Ham. Yes, lady, I meant what I said.

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers* **Polonius**

You miserable, thoughtless, interfering fool, farewell ! I took you to be the king. Submit to your fate. You now realise that to poke one's nose into the affairs of others is a dangerous game. (*Turning to the Queen*). Don't be twiching your hands anymore. Sit down quietly and let me turn your heart inside out, because I am determined to do so if your heart is soft enough to take any impression ; if it has not been hardened so much that it will be absolutely impregnable to sense or understanding.

Queen. What have I done that you speak to me so rudely and so impertinently.

Ham. You have done such an act that kills every sense of decency and modesty, that regards virtue a mere pretension, that takes away the beauty and purity of love, and puts an ill name upon it, that turns the sacred pledges of marriage into unholy oaths of gamblers. You have done such an act that makes the marriage contract a meaningless tie ; and reduced religion to mere verbal arguments or contests. The face of heaven blushes with a feeling of shame, and this solid and compact earth turns pale and dark to see your act as if the day of extinction of the world has arrived.

Queen. May I hear what act of mine makes you talk so loudly and exaggeratingly ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow :
Hyperion's curls ; the front of Jove himself ;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill ;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man ;
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows ;
Here is your husband ; like a mildew'd ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes ?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
And batten on this moor ? Ha ! have you eyes ?
You cannot call it love ; for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment : and what judgment
Would step from this to this ? Sense, sure, you have
Else could you not have motion : but, sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd : for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserve'd some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind ?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame ! where is thy blush ? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more :
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

Hamlet. Nay, but to live
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty,--

Queen. O, speak to me no more ;
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears :
No more, sweet Hamlet !

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Look here at this picture and that one. They are the portraits of the two brothers. See what beauty is imprinted on this forehead, how it has the locks of hair which adorned the head of Hyperion ; the Sun God ; how it possesses the face of Jove, the eyes of Mars with a commanding and majestic look, how it has the gait or bearing of Mercury who has just descended on a high mountain, and how it has all the qualities and features of a perfect man endowed, as it were, by all the gods in heaven. This was your husband. Look now at the other picture of your present husband, how he looks like a tainted ear of corn whose very breath is most destructive to his healthy brother. Do you see ? You had such a beautiful mountain to feed on but you preferred to graze upon a barren land ? Have you really eyes ? You cannot say that it was out of love that you did so, because at your advanced age passion is dull and slow and is controlled by reason. What sense of reason can be justified choosing your present husband in preference to your former husband ? You surely possess some kind of sensibility otherwise how could you have impulses or desires ? But then, your real sense has been paralysed because even a mad person would not commit such a mistake as you have done ; nor your sense could be so much overwhelmed or confused that it could not distinguish between such different personalities. What evil spirit actually made you so blind as to commit such a blunder ? Even if all your senses were partially diseased or crippled ; if you had eyes without any power of vision, ears without any power of hearing, nose without any power of smelling, tongue without any power of taste, and skin without any power of touch, even then you could not have made such a mistake. How shameful your deed is indeed, and yet you do not feel ashamed of your act. Most uncontrollable passion, if it can fire the body of an old woman, how much more can it kindle an youthful body and melt it in the fire of passion. Now we should not blame a young person at all because we find that passion can inflame even an ice-cold old woman ; making her forget totally all her reason and other senses.

Queen. O Hamlet, do not torture me anymore with your most biting words which make me turn my eyes into my soul in order to see my real character, which is so full of dark spots that it is impossible to wipe them out.

Ham. Yet knowing all this you want to live a life of lewdness and incestuous love.

Queen. Speak no more to me, my dear Hamlet. Your words stab my heart through my ears just like daggers.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. A murderer and a villain ;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord : a vice of kings ;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket '

Queen. No more !

Hamlet. A king of shreds and patches,—

Enter **Ghost**

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards ! What would your gracious figure ?

Queen. Alas, he's mad !

Hamlet. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command ?
O, say !

Ghost. Do not forget ; this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits :
O, step between her and her fighting soul
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works :
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Hamlet. How is it with you, lady ?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse ?
Fourth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Start up, and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look ?

Ham. On him, on him ! Look you, how pale he glares !
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me ;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects : then what I have to do
Will want true colour ; tears perchance for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this ?

Hamlet. Do you see nothing there ?

Queen. Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear ?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Your present husband is a murderer and a scoundrel : he is just like a slave before your former husband because he is far inferior to his brother. He is an evil spirit of kings, a robber or pilferer of the state or the kingdom, who stole the crown and put it in his pocket.

Queen. Please stop.

Ham. Your present husband is merely a beggarly picture of a king.

Enter **Ghost**

Save me, O heavenly angels ; protect me with your wings. What do you want me to do, most benevolent spirit ?

Queen. Alas, he is mad !

Ham. Have you come to rebuke your son who is slow in action, who let time pass away and also determination to grow weaker, and who neglected to carry out your solemn commands. O speak out what you want me to do.

Ghost. Do not forget that I have come only to kindle your resolve. But see how your mother is bewildered. Lend some solace to her struggling spirit. Imagination has the greatest effect upon weak minds. Console her, Hamlet.

Ham. How are you feeling, madam ?

Queen. Alas ! How do you feel ? How is it you are fixing your eyes in the empty air and holding a conversation with emptiness. Your eyes seem to be coming out of their sockets like sleeping soldiers suddenly disturbed by an alarm. Your hair is standing on end as if it were all alive. O my sweet son, try to put the refreshing touch of your patience upon the vigour and violence of your diseased mind. At what are you staring ?

Ham. I am staring at him (my father). See how pale he looks ! If his looks and cause of grief could speak to stones, they would be moved to action. Do not look at me because your pathetic looks may weaken my determination, and then, my action may be changed from bloodshed to tears, *i. e.*, from taking revenge to feeling sympathy.

Queen. To whom are you speaking all this ?

Ham. Don't you see anything there ?

Queen. I see nothing there although I can see everything else.

Ham. Did you not here anything ?

Queen. No, no others voice than ours ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit* **Ghost**

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Hamlet. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music; 'tis no madness
That I have utter'd; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love or grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue:
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain

Hamlet. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night; but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angle yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night;
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy:
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either master the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I'll blessing beg of you—For this same lord,
[*Pointing to* **Polonius**
I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins, and worse to remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Look there, how the spirit is quietly moving away ! It is the spirit of my father appearing in the very same dress that he used to wear. Look how he is disappearing through the gate.

[*Exit* **Ghost**

Queen. This is nothing but a hallucination, the creation of your brain, It is madness which is expert in bringing forth such shadowy things.

Ham. Do you call it madness ? My pulse is beating as normally as yours and indicating perfect health. I have not spoken like a mad man. I can react to it quite successfully which a mad man will fail to do so. Mother, for the sake of God, do not try to deceive yourself by thinking that it is not your guilt but my madness that makes me speak in such a wild fashion. Such thinking may hide for some time the rotten wound in your heart but it will spread its infection and help its further rottenness without being perceived by you. You should, therefore, acknowledge your guilt before God, express your regret for it, prevent the repetition of such sins in future, and take every care that you do not do anything which may further degrade your soul. Pardon me for speaking so honestly and bluntly because in these degenerate times, it is the virtous person who has to beg pardon from a vicious person and flatter him too in order to help wickedness or vice.

Queen. O Hamlet, you have ripped open my heart.

Ham. Throw away the worse part of your character and try to live a virtuous life for the remaining years. Good night ! Do not lie with my uncle in the same bed. Pretend virtue if you really do not possess it. Custom is undoubtedly a devil that robs a person of all his virtues, because it gets used to all sorts of evil habits : but it is a good spirit also in the sense that if one starts doing a good act and repeating the same act, it becomes his good habit by which he can cure his evil habits. Resist the temptation of lying with uncle tonight, and you will find it a much easier task to do the same the next night ; and in this way, it will completely change your habit and will either completely control the evil desire or kill it for ever most successfully. Once more, good night ! When you desire to have the blessing of God, I will pray for you in order to secure that blessing. As for this lord (pointing of Polonius), I am sorry for him : but God has ordained that he should be punished by me and I should be punished by him, and thereby I should prove to be God's instrument of justice. I shall place him somewhere, and I shall take the entire responsibility of having killed him. So, good night once more ! I have to be unkind in order to do good to you. This is just the beginning of unhappy things ; worse things are yet to follow. But, madam, I have to speak one word more to you.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Queen. What shall I do ?

Hamlet. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed :
Pinch wanton on your cheek ; call you his mouse
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know ;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concerning hide ? who would do so ?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Hamlet. I must to England ; you know that ?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot ; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd : and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar : and't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing
I'll lug the corpse into the neighbour room.
Mother, good night. Indeed, this counsellor (Polonius)
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave.
Who was in life a foolish parting knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally* ; **Hamlet** *dragging in* **Polonius**

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A room in the castle*

Enter **King, Queen, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves :
You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Queen. What else do you want me to do ?

Ham. I am not going to ask you to do what I am going to speak. Let the proud king tempt you to sleep with him again, put passionate kisses on your cheeks, call you his dearest darling, scratch your neck passionately with his unholy fingers in order to draw out the secret from you whether I am really mad or mad with a purpose. It would be fair if you tell him the truth because you as a queen, as an honest self-restrained and prudent woman cannot surely conceal from a toad, a bat or a cat like him things which concern him seriously. Who will not disclose such dear secrets under similar circumstances ? You might also disclose the secrets, in spite of your good sense and capacity to maintain secrecy, and bring ruin upon yourself just as the foolish monkey who unlocked a cage of birds on the top of a house, and seeing them flying, made an experiment by getting into the empty cage and jumping from the house top only to break his neck ?

Queen. Let me assure you that, if words are made of breath and breath is made of life, I shall never disclose to anybody what you have spoken to me so long I am alive.

Ham. Do you know that I shall have to go to England ?

Queen. I forgot all about it. Alas ! it has been so decided.

Ham. Letters have been packed and sealed. Two of my old school fellows carry the commission (authority). I cannot trust them more than I can trust the double-tongued serpents. They have been entrusted with the job of conducting me out of Denmark and initiating me to some foul deed. Let the plan be laid out. It is a good fun to blow up the inventor of a plot with his own invention. I will be in serious trouble if I cannot hatch a fouler conspiracy than this and destroy them completely. It is an exciting game when one clever person has to play against another clever person. The death of this person (Polonius) will now make me active. I shall now thrust his dead body into the adjacent chamber. Good night, mother ! This counsellor (Polonius) is now perfectly quiet ; but while he was alive, he was most talkative and foolish. Come along, sir, let me do my last job with you. Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally* ; **Hamlet** *dragging in* **Polonius**

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A room in the castle*

Enter **King, Queen, Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. There must be some significance behind your deepdrawn sighs. You must explain the reasons of your sighs and it is proper that we should understand them. Where is your son ?

CC-0 Chandigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries "A rat, a rat!"
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all:
To you yourself, to us, to every one,
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt
This mad young man: but so much was our love,
We should not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Re-enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go seek him out; speak fair and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: (so, haply slander—
Whose whisper o'er world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot—may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. O, come away?
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

[*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Queen. Leave us alone for a short time.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Ah, my lord, should I tell you what I have seen tonight ?

King. What have you seen, Gertrude ? How is Hamlet ?

Queen. Mad as the sea and the storm when these two elements struggle to out-bid each other. When he heard some sound behind the screen he cried out in his fits of madness, "A rat, a rat !", drew his sword and in his fits of imaginary fear or suspicion killed the concealed good old man.

King. What a painful act ! Had we been there we would have been killed. His freedom is a cause of alarm to us all.....to you, to myself and to all else. I do not know how this ghastly killing be defended or explained. The responsibility or blame of this act will be put upon us because it was our duty to keep this mad young lunatic under restraint ; but our love for him prevented us from realising what was proper for us to do just as a person suffering from some foul disease tries to conceal it and thus allows it to eat into his vitals. Where has he gone ?

Queen. He has gone to put away the dead body somewhere. He repents his action and thereby shows the good quality in him just as gold shows its lustre through the baser metal that oares it.

King. O Gertrude, let us go. Before the sun is visible on the mountains, he will be packed off from Denmark. This ghastly deed we shall have to overlook and connive at with all the show of power and diplomacy. Ho, Guildenstern !

Re-enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

My friends, go and lend your further help. Hamlet in his fits of madness has killed Polonius and has dragged away the dead body from his mother's chamber. Go, find him out. Speak gently and bring the dead body to the church. Please hurry up.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Come along, Gertrude ; we shall invite and consult our most prudent friends. We shall tell them of what has been accidentally done and also we shall tell them what we intend to do, so that we may escape the arrow of ill name, which always hits everybody everywhere in the world just as a cannon-ball hits its mark. O, let us go. My heart is torn by fear and apprehension. [*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **Hamlet**

Hamlet. Safely stowed.

Ros., Guil. [*Within*] Hamlet ! Lord Hamlet.

Hamlet. What noise ? who calls on Hamlet ? O, here they come.

Enter **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body ?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto' is kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis ; that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

Hamlet. Do not believe it.

Rosencrantz. Believe what ?

Hamlet. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge ! what replication should be made by the son of a king ?

Rosencrantz. Take you me for a sponge, my lord ?

Hamlet. Ay, sir ; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end : he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw : first mouthed, to be last swallowed : when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you and sponge, you shall be dry again.

Rosencrantz. I understand you not, my lord.

Hamlet. I am glad of it : a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Rosencrantz. My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go with us to the king.

Hamlet. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

Guildenstern. A thing, my lord !

Hamlet. Of nothing : bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **King**, *attended*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose :
Yet must not we put strong law on him :
He's loved of the distracted multitude,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **Hamlet**

Ham. The dead body has been safely concealed.

Ros.
Guil. } [*Within*] Hamlet ! Lord Hamlet !

Ham. Silence ! What is that sound ? Who is calling me ? O, this way they are coming.

[*Enter* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

Ros. What have you done with the dead body, my lord ?

Ham. I have mixed it with dust because it is as good as dust.

Ros. Tell us where it is lying so that we may carry it to the church.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what ?

Ham. That I can trust your advice and not mine own. Then again, when a sponge puts a question to me what should be its answer from the son of a king ?

Ros. Do you take me for a sponge, my lord ?

Ham. Yes, sir ; you are a sponge because you suck up the king's favour, authority and other rewards. The officers, who are sponges like you, do real service to the king at the end because he keeps them ready at hand just as a monkey keeps nuts in his mouth so that he may chew them last of all in order to squeeze out all the secrets from you as one squeezes out all the water from a sponge and makes it dry again.

Ros. I do not follow what you mean,my lord.

Ham. I am glad to hear it because hard words do not make any sense to the ear of a fool (i. e. a fool cannot understand such words).

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is lying, and you must also accompany us to the king.

Ham. The body is near the king but the king does not know where it is. The king is a thing.....(i. e. not a living body).

Guil. How do you call the king a thing, my lord ?

Ham. He is a thing of nothing ; let us go to him. Let the fox keep hiding and let all people chase it, (Polonius is the fox and all else are hunters).

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **King** *attended*

King. I have sent men to find him out and also the dead body. His freedom is indeed most dangerous and yet the penalty of law cannot be imposed upon him for the act of murder. He is loved

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And where 'tis so the offender's scourge is weigh'd
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.

Enter **Rosencrantz**

How now! what hath befall'n?

Rosencrantz. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Rosencrantz. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Guildenstern**

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Hamlet. At supper.

King. At supper! where?

Hamlet. Not where he eats but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service,—two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Hamlet. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Hamlet. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there [*To some* **Attendants**

Ham. He will stay till ye come [*Exeunt* **Attendants**

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

very much by the fanatic masses who are not guided by reason but by sense-impression, and in such a case, the penalty awarded to the offender is considered, and not the nature of the offence. In order to tide over the difficult situation we decided to send him away to England. Foul diseases require drastic remedies otherwise they cannot be cured.

Enter **Rosencrantz**

What news do you bring ? What has happened ?

Ros. My lord, we have faild to persuade him to tell us where he has concealed the dead body.

King But where is Hamlet ?

Ros. He is waiting outside under escort to hear your command.

King. Bring him here.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern, bring in Lord Hamlet.

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Rosencrantz**

King. Now, Hamlet, where is Polonius ?

Ham. He is at supper.

King. At supper ! where is he ?

Ham. He is lying where he is not eating but where he is being eaten by a swarm of worms who love to feed on a politician. The worm is the real Lord of food, for he feeds on all. We fatten ourselves on creatures in order to fatten worms on our bodies. The well-fed emperor and the starved begger belong to the same class because both serve as food for the worms when they die, which is the end of both.

King. Alas ! alas !

Ham. A man may catch a fish with the worm that has eaten the body of a king ; and he can eat the fish that has eaten the worm.

King. What do you mean by all this ?

Ham. I am simply showing you how a king can pass through the intestines of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius ?

Ham. He is in heaven ; send some messenger to find him out ; if he cannot find him there, you may search for him in hell. But if you cannot discover him within a month, you will be able to smell him while climbing up the stairs into the lobby *i. e.* the entrance hall.

King. Go search for him there. [*To some* **Attendants**

Ham. He will be there till you reach there. [*Exeunt* **Attendants**

King. Hamlet, due to this act of yours, which we regret so much, we must send you off from Denmark as quickly as possible for your safety. Therefore, get yourself ready. The ship is ready, the wind is also favourable, and your comrades are waiting for you—for your voyage to England.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. For England!

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Hamlet. Good

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Hamlet. I see a cherub that see them. But, come; for England! Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Hamlet. My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England;

[*Exit*

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,—
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us,—thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

[*Exit*

SCENE IV. *A plain in Denmark*

Enter **Fortinbras**, *a* **Captain**, *and* **Forces**, *marching*

Fortinbras. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
Claims the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye
Captain. I will do't my lord.

For. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt* **Fortinbras** *and* **Forces**

Enter **Hamlet**, **Rosencrantz**, **Guildenstern**, *and others*

Hamlet. Good sir, whose powers are these?
Captain. They are of Norway, sir.
Hamlet. How purposed, sir, I pray you?
Captain. Against some part of Poland.
Hamlet. Who commands them, sir?
Captain. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Is that for England ?
King. Yes, for England, Hamlet.
Ham. Good.
King. It is really good if you know why we are sending you to England.
Ham. I see an angel who knows why I am sent to England. If I am bound for England, farewell, dear mother.
King. Bid farewell to your loving father as well. Hamlet.
Ham. Farewell to my mother ! Father and mother are the same because they are husband and wife and because husband and wife are of the same flesh ; therefore my mother farewell ! [*Exit*
King. Follow him closely. Tempt him to board the ship as early as possible. Do not lose time in the least. I must see him off from Denmark this very night. Go ! Everything has been packed and sealed whatever is connected with this affair. Please, he quick !

Plot against [*Exeunt* **Rosencrantz** *and* **Guildenstern**

King of England, if you value my love in the least, as you are expected to do, out of fear of my great power, and also because the great wound, which you had received from the Danish sword, has not yet healed up, and as you are still paying us tribute out of the same consideration, I believe that you will not indifferently set aside our command which is fully laid in the sealed letters and the real purport of which is the immediate death of Hamlet Carry out, England, my command, because like the hectic fever he is consuming my blood ; and therefore, you must relieve me of this malady. I can have no peace of mind till I know that it has been done whatever may be the consequences. [*Exit*

SCENE IV. *A Plain in Denmark*

Enter **Fortinbras**, *a* **Captain** *and* **Soldiers**, *marching*

For. Go Captain, convey my regards to the Danish king. Tell him that by his permission Fortinbras wants a passage of his troops through his kingdom. You know the common place of meeting. You may tell the king that if his majesty wants to have anything from me I shall be glad to visit him and pay my homage.
Cap. I shall carry out your orders, my lord.
For. Let us march on slowly.

[*Exeunt* **Fortinbras** *and* **Soldiers**

Enter **Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern** *and others*

Ham. Good gentleman, whose soldiers are these ?
Cap. They are Norwegian soldiers, sir.
Ham. May I like to know, sir, the purpose of their movement ?
Cap. They are marching against some part of Poland.
Ham. Who is in command of these troops, sir ?
Cap. Fortinbras, the nephew of the old king of Norway.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Captain. Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats five, I would not farm it.
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Hamlet. Why, then, the Polack never will defend it.

Captain. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [*Exit*

Rosencrantz. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before. [*Exeunt all except* **Hamlet**

Why all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
A thought which quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do;"
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth, exhort me:
Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Let by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Are they proceeding against the main land of Poland or against some frontier of it ?

Cap. To speak the truth, we are going to secure a small plot of land, which has no worth except its name. I would not agree to spend even five ducats for possessing it for purposes of cultivation, nor would this piece of land fetch any better price to either Norway or to Poland if it were sold.

Ham. The Poles then, I am sure, will never try to defend it.

Cap. But the Poles have already guarded it with soldiers.

Ham. Ten thousand soldiers and twenty thousand ducats will not suffice to settle the dispute over this piece of land. Such disputes are the result of the accumulation of wealth and of a long period of peace ; it is just like an abscess which slowly and imperceptibly eats into the vitals of a man till he dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. Good bye to you, sir !

Ros. Will you please move forward, my lord ?

Ham. I shall join your company immediately. Your better go a little ahead of me. [*Exeunt all but* **Hamlet**

How everything is accusing me my slow activity and inciting me to revenge ! A man is better than a beast if his aim in life is merely to eat and sleep. God has given us the power of reason, with which we think of the past and future, not waste it by keeping it idle. I cannot say whether it is sheer forgetfulness which is peculiar to the beast, or it is some kind of hesitation attendant upon the thinking of the pros and cons of a matter that indicates our timidity or discretion. I am still alive to say that this revenge is yet to be taken when I have the necessary cause, will, strength and means to execute it. Examples as great as earth itself are inciting me to revenge. Look at this big and fiery army which is commanded by a very young prince, who being inspired by some divine ambition does not care in the least for the great risks involved in the attack which he is directing against his rival for a mere petty piece of land. In order to be great one does not require any great cause to move him to action ; even a trifling cause for the sake of honour should be sufficient ground for taking action. Now, let me see my position. My father has been murdered, my mother has been seduced and tainted—these alone are sufficient reasons for rousing my spirit of revenge but they are lying inactive in me. I am put to shame when I see before my

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain ? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth ! [*Exit*

SCENE V. **Elsinore**. *A room in the castle*

Enter **Queen**, **Horatio**, *and a* **Gentleman**

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gentleman. She is important, indeed distract ;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

Gent. She speaks much of her father ; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world ; and hems, and beats her heart ;
Spurns enviously at straws ; speaks things in doubt
That carry but half sense : her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection ; they aim at it :
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Haratio. 'Twere good she were spoken with ; for she may strew
Dangerous conjunctures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. Let her come in. [*Exit* **Horatio**
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss :
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter **Horatio** *with* **Ophelia**

Ophelia. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark ?

Queen. How now ; Ophelia !

Ophelia. [*Sings*] How should I your true love know
From another one ?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady ; what imports this song ?

Ophelia. Say you ? nay, pray you ; mark.
[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone ;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia,—

Ophelia. Pray you, mark.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

eyes twenty thousand soldiers going to lose their lives merely for the temptation of winning fame and of capturing a piece of land which is not sufficiently large to accommodate their feet while fighting or their dead bodies when killed. Hence forward I wish my mind to cherish only murderous or revengeful thoughts and no other thoughts worth the name.

SCENE V. **Elsinore.** *A room in the castle*

Enter **Queen, Horatio** *and a* **Gentleman**

Queen. I will not talk to her.

Gent. She is bent upon seeing you ; she seems too crazy ; one should pity her condition.

Queen. What does she want ?

Gent. She is constantly talking about her father. She says that she hears about the treachery of the world ; she then starts beating her breast, crossing her hands across her bosom. She suspects every trifling thing ; utters certain words which are not fully intelligible ; her speech carries no sense and yet those meaningless words impress the listeners who try to put some sense into them and interpret them according to their own ways of thinking. Her words in conjuction with her glances, nods of the head and other gestures lead one to think that there may be some special significance about her words, although they are nothing but indefinite and sad in tone and texture.

Hor. It is advisable that you should speak to her otherwise she may help the wicked minds in drawing dangerous conclusions from her words and gestures which may lead to some great evil effects.

Queen. Let her then appear before me. [*Exit* **Gentleman**

(*Aside*) My mind is already sick like the mind of a sinner. To such a mind every trifling thing forebodes some calamity. The guilty mind is constantly haunted by suspicion which exposes it in spite of its efforts to conceal itself.

Re-enter **Gentleman** *with* **Ophelia**

Oph. Where is the beautiful Queen of Denmark ?

Queen. How do you do, Ophelia ?

Oph. (*Sings*) How should I distinguish your true love from false love ? Is it by your pilgrim's hat and staff and shining shoes ?

Queen. Alas ! sweet lady, what is the significance of this song ?

Oph. Do you want to know what it means ? Please then note what I say. (*Sings*) He is no more, lady ; he is dead. His head lies upon earth covered with green grass while his feet are resting on a stone. Oh, ho !

Queen. No, Ophelia, I do not understand you...

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

[Sings] White his shroud as the mountain snow,—

Enter **King**

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. [*Sings*] Larded with sweet flowers
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Ophelia. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Ophelia. Pray you, let's have no words of this: but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

King. Pretty Ophelia! How long hath she been thus?

Ophelia. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night; good night. [*Exit*

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

[*Exit* **Horatio**

O, this is the poison of deep grief: it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies.
But in battalions! First her father slain:
Next, your son gone: and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death: and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my near Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
Give me superfluous death.

[*A noise within*

Queen. Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

What is the matter?

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Oph. Please listen. (*Sings*) The winding sheet of his dead body is as white as the mountain snow.

Enter **King**

Queen. Alas ! see here, my lord.

Oph. (*Sings*). The deadbody was strewn all over with fragrant flowers which seemed to shed tears of true love over his grave.

King. How do you do, pretty lady ?

Oph. Well, may God bless you ! People say that a baker's daughter was converted into an owl. Lord, we know what we are at present but we do not know what we are going to be in future. May God bless your home !

King. She is thinking of her father.

Oph. Please do not talk of this but when they will enquire what it means you may tell them : (*Sings*) To-morrow is St. Valentine's day, and early in the morning I, a chaste maiden shall come to your window as your Valentine.

King. Pretty Ophelia ! How long has she been in this state of mind ?

Oph. I hope everything will be all right. We must hold our patience ; but I cannot help weeping when I think that they have placed him on the cold ground. My brother must come to know of it, and so, I thank you for your good advice. Let my coach be ready, please. Good night, ladies : good night, sweet ladies : good night, good night ! [*Exit*

King. Attend her closely : keep a good watch over her, all of you please. [*Exit* **Horatio**

O, this is the bitter result of her great sorrow which is due to her father's death. O Gertrude, when misfortunes come, they do not come singly but in a crowd. First, her father has been killed ; next your son has been packed off to England because of his violent action ; the people are haunted with an evil and dangerous suspicion about the death of Polonius ; they have started thinking and talking at random behind the screen. We have burried him in haste and in an irregular manner poor Ophelia has lost her wits—her power of reason without which we all are as lifeless as pictures and as irrational as beasts. Last but not the least is the secret return of her brother from France. He broods over the mystery of his father's death and does not disclose his designs to anybody but allows himself to be poisoned by the mischievous reports of his father's death, which being circulated and the real facts of the case being unknown to the people, the entire blame will be thrown on our shoulders. O my Gertrude, this, just like a play of murder, is giving me all the sensations of death before my actual death. [*A noise within*

Queen. Alas ! what is this noise about ?

King. Where are my body-guards ? Let them guard the door.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter a **Gentleman**

What is the matter ?

Gentleman. Save yourself, my lord :
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord ;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, "Choose we, Laertes shall be king !"
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
"Laertes shall be a king, Laertes king !"

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry !
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs !

King. The doors are broke. [*Noise within*

Enter **Laertes** *armed* ; **Danes** *following*

Laertes. Where is this king ? Sirs, stand you all without.
Danes. No, let's come in.
Laertes. I pray you give me leave.
Danes. We will, we will. [*They retire without the door*
Laertes. I thank you : keep the door. O thou vile King, give me my father !
Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.
Laertes. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard ;
Cries cuckold to my father ; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.
King. What's the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like ?
Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person ;
There's such divinity both hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed : let him go, Gertrude :
Speak, man.
Laertes. Where is my father ?
King. Dead.
Queen. But not by him.
King. Let him demand his fill.
Laertes. How came he dead ? I'll not be juggled with :
To hell, allegiance ! vows to the blackest devil !
Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit !
I dare damnation : to this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes ; only I'll be revenged
Most thoroughly for my father.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter a **Gentleman**

What is wrong ?

Gen. Look to your protection, my lord. The ocean does not with greater violence and haste flood the neighbouring lands to the shore than Laertes, at the head of a rebellious crowd, is overpowering your officers. The crowd addresses him as their master, and ignoring completely all old traditions, customs and laws, they are crying, "We choose Leartes ; he shall be our king." They, in their fits of excitment, are throwing their caps into the air, are clapping their hands, and are shouting most loudly, rending the sky, as it were, "Laertes shall be our king, he alone shall be our king !"

Queen. How foolishly they are crying on the wrong scent !
How wretched you are, you faithless Danish boys ! [*Noise within*

King. The doors are forced open.

Enter **Laertes** *armed* ; **Danes** *following*

Laer. Where is this king ? Gentlemen please stand outside.

Danes. No, let us go in.

Lear. I entreat you to let me go in alone.

Danes. We will, surely. [*They retire without the door*

Laer. I thank you, Guard the door. O you wicked king !
Give me back my father !

Queen. Be patient, good Laertes.

Laer. If I be patient, every drop of my blood will declare that I am an illegitimate son of my father, that my father was the husband of a faithless woman, and that my mother was prostitute although she was a perfectly chaste woman.

King. What makes you, Laertes, revolt in this furious manner ? Release him, Gertrude, you need not be afraid about my personal safety. A king is so well-portected by God that no treacherous attack can do any injury to him. Tell me, Laertes, why you are so much enraged. Release him, Gertrude, Speak out, Laertes.

Laer. Where is my father ?

King. He is dead.

Queen. But the king did not kill him.

King. Let him put any number of questions till he is satisfied.

Laer. How did he die ? I will not be tricked or bluffed by anybody I throw away all my loyalty and my solemn oaths to the devil, my sense of justice and decency into the darkest cell. I do not care if I am damned in hell. I stick to this position, namely, that whatever may be the consequences, I do not care for the penalties on this earth or in the other world ; but I am determined to take revenge upon the person whoever may be responsible for my father's death.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. Who shall stay you ?

Laertes. My will, not all the world :
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ within your revenge
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser ?

Laertes. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then ?

Laertes. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,
And like the kind life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*Within*] Let her come in.

Laertes. How now ! what noise is that ?

Re-enter **Ophelia**

O heat, dry up my brains ! tears seven-times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May !
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !
O heavens ! is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life ?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. [*Sings*] They bore him barefaced on the bier ?
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny :
And in his grave rain'd many a tear,
Fare you well, my dove !

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. [*Sings*] You must sing a-down a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.
O, how the wheel becomes it ! It is the false steward, that
stole his master's daughter.

Laertes. This nothing's more than matter.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. Who is going to prevent you ?

Laer. It is only my own will, and not the whole world can prevent me. As for my resources, I will store them up in such a manner that even with little efforts I can achieve the greatest revenge.

King. Good Laertes, if you want to know the truth about your father's death, have you decided to take revenge alike upon the guilty and the innocent, the loser and the winner.

Laer. I will take revenge only upon my father's enemies.

King. Do you want to know those enemies ?

Laer. His good friends I will embrace with both of my arms (i. e. most warmly), and I shall shed my life-blood for their sake just as the pelican bird feeds her young ones on her own blood.

King. Now you are speaking justly and gently like a gentleman. That I am absolutely innocent of your father's death and also that I am deeply grieved at heart on account of his death, will be made clear to you as day-light.

Danes. [*Within*] Let her be admitted here.

Laer. What is the matter ? What is this noise about ?

Re-enter **Ophelia**

Let fiery rage consume my brains, and let bitter tears blind the power of my vision ! In the name of God, I swear that I shall take sufficient revenge upon the person whoever is responsible for your madness.

Laer. O, lovely rose of the spring season ! Dear maid : kind sister, sweet Ophelia ! O God ! Is it really believable that a young woman's intelligence should be as frail as an old man's life ? Nature is most refined in her love ; she sacrifices our most precious part i. e. our sanity and allows it to go with the object of our love.

Oph. [*Sings*] They carried his dead body on the bier without any proper covering or decoration but plenty of tears were shed over his grave. Fare you well, my love !

Laer. If you were not mad and if you had demanded revenge for your father, you could not have excited so much sympathy from the people.

Oph. [*Sings*] You must sing a-down, a-down, if you call him a-down-a. O how this song suits the spinning-wheel ! It was a faithless steward who eloped with his master's daughter.

Laer. Whatever nonsense she speaks is more significant than any sense.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ophelia. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laertes. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Ophelia. There's fennel for you, and columbines! there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays; O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy; I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

[*Sings*] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,—

Laertes. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Ophelia. [*Sings*]

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead:
Go to thy death-bed;
He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan:
God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

Laertes. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

Laertes. Let this be so:
His means of death, his obscure burial,—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall:
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pary you, go with me.

[*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Oph. The rosemary flower is a token of remembrance while the pansy flower is a token of melancholy thought.

Laer. Her madness is full of deep thoughts and past memories..... all blended together.

Oph. There are fennels (symbols of flattery and deceit) and columbines (symbols of faithlessness in marriage) for you ; there is rue (symbol of sorrow or repentance) for you ; here is some flower for me which we may call the herb of grace on Sundays ; you must put on your rue in a different manner. There is daisy (symbol of deceit) : I would offer you some violets (symbol of faithfulness) ; but they sickened or dried up all on the death of my father. They say he died peacefully. (*Sings*) For beautiful sweet Robin is all my delight.

Laer. She turns everything into beauty whatever she speaks whether it is about thought, sorrow, feeling or hell.

Oph. [*Sings*] And will he not come again ? No, no, he is dead. Go to your grave. He will never come again. His beard was white as snow ; his head was entirely grey like flax. He is gone ; he is gone ; we mourn in vain. May God have mercy on his soul ; and of all Christian souls, may God be with you ! [*Exit*

Laer. Do you mark this, O God ?

King. Laertes, I must have some share of your grief ; you must not refuse me the right. Go alone, and any of your friends whom you consider as wise ; let them judge us both. If by direct or indirect means they find me guilty I will give away everything to you.....kingdom, crown, life and everything whatever I call my own.....that you may be satisfied. But if I am not guilty, please hold your patience and collaborate with me in order to find out the mystery and do full justice to it.

Laer. Let it be as you say. His manner of death, his unknown burial, no family emblem, no sword, no shield put up over his grave, no proper ceremony performed with due pomp and show.....all these demand urgent inquiry from man as well as from God. I demand satisfaction on all these questions.

King. Surely, you will have perfect satisfaction, and let the real offender be duly punished. Please come along with me.

[*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **Horatio** *and a* **Servant**

Horatio. What are they that would speak with me ?

Servant. Sailors, sir : they say they have letters for you.

Horatio. Let them come in. [*Exit* **Servant**

I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet 5

Enter **Sailors**

First Sailor. God bless you, sir,

Horatio. Let him bless thee too.

First Sailor. He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir : it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England ; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is. 11

Horatio. [*Reads*] "Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king : they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them ; on the instant they got clear of our ship : so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy : but they knew what they did ; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent ; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb : yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England : of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. 27

"He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet."

Come, I will make you way for these your letters :
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me 30
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt*

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **King** *and* **Laertes**

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laertes. It well appears : but tell me 5
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **Horatio** *and a* **Servant**

Hor. Who are the people that want to talk to me ?

Serv. They are sailors, sir ; and they say that they have letters for you.

Hor. Bring them to me. [*Exit* **Servant**

Enter **Sailors**

First Sail. God bless you, sir.

Hor. May God bless you also ?

First Sail. God will, sir, if it please him. Here is a letter for you, sir, which is sent by the ambassador who is going to England. I am made to understand that your name is Horatio.

Hor. (*Reads*) "Horatio, when you have read this letter help these fellows in meeting the king ; they have letters for him. During the first two days of our voyage, a very powerful sea-robber chased our ship, and finding our ship too slow overtook us. We were compelled to put up a fight during which I got into the pirate ship which at once set sail again. So, I alone became the prisoner. They treated me kindly. They knew that they had service to the son of a king, and so, I should return their kindness by doing some service to them. Let the king receive the letters I have sent for him. You must come immediately to meet me or as fast as you should fly for life. I have to speak to you something which will rob you of your power of speech..... .....you will be so much astonished. Words are too weak to express that feeling. These good fellows will conduct you to my presence. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are bound for England. I have to tell you much about them. Farewell !

"He whom you know thine, Hamlet."

Come, I shall quickly lead you to the king for delivering these letters so that you may also as quickly lead me to the person from whom you have brought these letters. [*Exeunt*

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle*

Enter **King** *and* **Laertes**

King. Now your conscience must consider me innocent and you must regard me as your true friend because you have listened to everything with a patient ear, and you are sufficiently intelligent to understand that he who has killed your noble father tried to kill me also.

Laer. It seems quite distinctly to be so. But tell me why you did not take any steps against such a criminal act when your own personal security, your wisdom and every other consideration demanded urgently its punishment ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. O, for two special reasons ;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself,—
My virtue or my plague, be't either which,—
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him ;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laertes. And so have I a noble father lost ;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections : but my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that : you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :
I loved your father, and we love ourself ;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a **Messenger**

How now ! what news ?

Messenger. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
This to your majesty : this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet ! who brought them ?

Messenger. Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not :
They were given me by Claudio : he received them
Of him that brought them

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.
Leave us. [*Exit* **Messenger**

[*Reads*] "High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes : when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

"**Hamlet**".

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come back ?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ?

Laertes. Know you the hand ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. There were two special reasons which may, in your view, appear to be weak but which are quite strong in my opinion. The first reason is that the queen, his mother, cannot live without seeing him constantly before her eyes ; and so far as I am concerned, whether it is a good thing or bad, as I am so closely knit up with her that, like the heavenly bodies, I cannot move out of her orbit or live without her. The second reason why he was not publicly denounced or punished is that he is so much loved by the people that they would overlook his faults out of their weakness for him and would interpret his faults as virtues just as the spring turns wood into stone. So, just as an arrow made of light wood cannot maintain its steady flight or hit its mark in a strong wind, so also his public trial or punishment would have had a reverse effect upon the people and would have also endangered my life.

Laer. So that is how I have lost my father, and my sister has been driven mad, my sister whose virtues once made her a matchless woman of her time. But I will not forget to take revenge upon the wrong-doer.

King. You need not disturb your sleep or your peace of mind on that account. You must not think that we are so blunt and impotent that we shall take lightly any danger that threatens our life or liberty. You will soon come to know more about it. I loved your father, and we have loved ourselves too and therefore you can easily understand what steps I am going to take.

Enter a **Messenger** *with letters*

What do you want ? What is the matter ?

Mess. Letters from Hamlet, my lord : this is meant for your majesty, and this for the queen.

King. Letters from Hamlet ! Who brought them ?

Mess. They say, my lord, sailors brought them. I did not meet them. These were given to me by Claudio who received them, in his turn, from somebody who brought them.

King. Leartes, I shall read the letters to you. Leave us messenger.

[*Exit* **Messenger**

[*Reads*] "Your exalted and powerful majesty, let me tell you that I have been put ashore in your kingdom absolutely naked and without anything. I beg your permission to meet you to-morrow and also to relate under what strange and sudden circumstances I had to return, Hamlet."

What does it really mean ? Have all others also come back ? Or is it some hoax and no fact at all ?

Laer. Do you know the hand-writing ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character, "Naked",—
And in a postscript here, he says, "alone".
Can you advise me?

Laertes. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
"Thus diddest thou".

King. If it be so, Laertes,—
As how should it be so? how otherwise?—
Will you be ruled by me?

Laertes. Ay, my lord:
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it accident.

Laertes. My lord, I will be ruled;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's bearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

Laertes. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but his gallant
Had witchcrafts in't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laertes. A Norman was't?

King. A Norman.

Laertes. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

King. It is Hamlet's hand writing. What does 'naked' mean ? And he adds another word 'alone' afterwards. Can you tell me what it may mean ?

Lear. I am unable to understand anything, my lord. Let me come. It kindles my passion of revenge, and I shall tell him in his very. face, "You murdered my father."

King. If it be a fact, Laertes ; but how can it be said whether it is a fact or not. Will you go by my advise ?

Laer. Yes, my lord, if you do not advise me to a compromise with Hamlet.

King. I shall advise you to follow such a course of action as will give you peace of mind. If he has really returned and if he does not want to resume his voyage again. I shall get him engaged in such an enterprise, which is mature in my brain, that he shall be positively destroyed by the scheme ; and for his death, nobody will be blamed ; not even his mother will suspect that it was anything but an accident.

Laer. My lord, I am ready to follow your advise, and I wish that you could devise the thing in such a way that I would be the instrument of his death.

King. Yes, it will be just as you desire. You have been much praised for some distinguishing quality, in the presence of Hamlet, ever since you have been travelling abroad. All your accomplishments put together did not excite so much jealousy in Hamlet as this particular quality did, although in my eyes it does not count in the least.

Laer. What quality is that my lord ?

King. It is a sort of decoration for a young man ; but it is a useful decoration, because just as light clothes suit a young man who is reckless about his health, so also black clothes suit an old man who is very careful about his health. Two months ago, I met here a gentleman from Normandy. I have seen with my own eyes and fought with my own hands, and therefore, I can certify that the Frenchmen are excellent horsemen ; but this gentleman from Normandy showed his wonderful skill in horsemanship ; he was so firmly saddled on the horseback and he conducted his horse in such a wonderful manner that it seemed as if he and the horse were but one body. He excelled all horsemen so far that with all my own tricks of horsemanship I felt far short of him.

Laer. Was he a Norman ?

King. Yes, a Norman.

Laer. I am sure, he was Lamond.

King. Yes, he was the man.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laertes. I know him well : he is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report,
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you : the scrimers of their nation
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this,—

Laertes. What out of this, my lord ?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you ?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart ?

Laertes. Why ask you this ?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father ;
But that I know love is begun by time :
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it :
And nothing is at a like goodness still ;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much : that we would do,
We should do when we would ; for this "would' changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents :
And then this "should" is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer
Hamlet comes back : what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words ?

Laertes. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home :
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laer. I know him quite well. He is really the pride and glory of the whole nation.

King. He said that he knew you. He talked so highly of your skill in fencing, and said, in fits of admiration, that it would be a wonderful exhibition if anybody could fight a duel with you with his sword. He frankly confessed that the swordsmen of his country could stand nowhere before you in thrust, in agility, in defence and in precision. Sir, his report about your skill in fencing excited so much of jealousy in Hamlet that he wished and prayed that you should return home as soon as possible to give him a chance of fencing with you. Now, out of this.....

Laer. What would you make out of this, my lord ?

King. Laertes, did you really love your father ? Or are you really making a show of your grief, through your face (outwardly) and not through your heart (inwardly) ?

Laer. Why do you put me such a question ?

King. I do not mean to say that you had no love for your father. I know that love develops in course of time and that time tests love and shows its warmth and fire. In the flame of love itself, there is wick which reduces the fire of love. Nothing can maintain its greatest intensity for ever just as every good thing when it has reached its height or peak grows weak and finally dies. Therefore, we should accomplish a deed as soon as we conceive or think of it ; because otherwise our determination to act will change and grow weaker because of the various obstacles in the form of men's opinions, actions and accidents. And then, all our speculation and planning end in our regret or in our failure to perform an act. This kind of regret may give us some idle consolation, but it will certainly pinch our conscience. But let us now come back to our present problem.....the return of Hamlet. What would you like to do in order to prove that your love for your father is not mere words but real action ?

Laer. I would like to kill him in a sacred place like the church where such crimes are forbidden.

King. No place should give any shelter to a murderer. There should be no territorial boundary for taking revenge or committing an act of revenge. But good Laertes, will you promise to confine yourself within your own room ? When Hamlet returns he will come to know that you too have returned to Denmark. We shall set some persons who will talk highly of your skill in fencing

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you ; bring you in fine together,
And wager on your heads : he, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not persue the foils ; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laertes. I will do't :
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal : I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this :
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape : if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance
'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof Soft ! let me see :
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings.
I ha't :
When in your motion you are hot and dry,—
As make your bouts more violent to that end,—
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce ; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

Enter **Queen**

How now, sweet queen !

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow : your sister's drown'd Laertes.

Leartes. Drown'd ! O, where ?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them :
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and will lend a further brightness to your glory which has been already conferred upon you by the Frenchman. We shall finally lead you both to fight a duel with some stakes. He being careless, noble-hearted and free from all mean tricks will never examine the swords so that easily with a little trick of your hand, you will be able to get hold of a pointed sword and pierce him to death, thereby fully avenging your father.

Laer. I will do just as you say. And to carry out your plan, I will poison my sword. I purchased an ointment from a quack ; it is so poisonous that if you merely touch a knife with it and draw a scratch with the knife, it will at once poison the blood of the person so fatally that no antidote prepared out of the various magic herbs collected under the moonlit nights will be able to save the person from immediate death. I will touch the point of my sword with this ointment so that if I merely scratch him with it, he is sure to die.

King. We shall consider the whole thing further and find out how time and means may be most suitable to our plan. If we think that this plan will miscarry due to some flaw in our action, it should better be given up ; and therefore, there should be an accessory plot which may help and strengthen our main plot and lead to success. Wait a moment ; let me think. We gill put a large stake upon your skill in fencing. Yes, I have found out the correct way to our success. While playing with the sword, you will get hot and thirsty, and see that your opponent demands some drink to slake his thirst. I shall get ready a cup for him. If he escapes your poisoned sword, and if he sips the poisoned drink, our purpose will be completely fulfilled. But wait, what is that sound ?

Enter **Queen**

What is the matter, dear Queen ?

Queen. Our sorrow follows closely another sorrow so quickly. Your sister is drowned, Laertes.

Laer. Drowned ! But where is she drowned ?

Queen. There is a willow tree growing in a slanting manner over the bank of the stream in which the white leaves are reflected. She came to that spot wearing garlands of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies and purples which are called deadmen's fingers by our chaste maids but which are given a vulgar name by the vulgar shepherds. While climbing the willow tree to hang her garlands

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide
And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element : but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death

Laertes. Alas, then she is drown'd ?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laertes. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears : but yet
It is our trick : nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord :
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it, [*Exit*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude :
How much I had to do to calm his rage !
Now fear I this will give it start again ;
Therefore let's follow. [*Exeunt*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A churchyard*

Enter two **Clowns**, *with spades, etc.*

First Clown. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation ?

Second Clown. I tell thee, she is ; and therefore make her grave straight : the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

First Clown. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence ?

Second Clown. Why, 'tis found so.

First Clown. It must be *se offendendo* ; it cannot be else. For here lies the point : if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act : and an act hath three branches ; it is to act, to do, to perform : argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

Second Clown. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,

First Clown. Give me leave. Here lies the water ; good : here stands the man ; good : if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,—mark you that ; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself : argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

on it, she broke one of the branches and fell into the murmuring stream with her full garments and flowers. Her garments spread out over the water and kept her floating for some time like a mermaid : and she was singing some old songs completely unware of her approaching death, just like a creature who felt perfectly at home in the water ; but then, when her garments were gradually soaked with water, her body was pulled down to the muddy bottom of the stream to lie there for ever.

Laer. Alas, then, she is drowned !

Queen. Drowned, drowned !

Laer. Poor Ophelia, you have been soaked with too much water, and therefore, I shall not add to it any more water with my tears. But as nature will have its way which we cannot resist, I should not feel ashamed of shedding some tears ; and when these tears will dry up, my weakness also will be forgotten. Farewell, my lord. I am tempted to burst into a fiery speech, but then, it is drowned in tears. [*Exit*

King. Gertrude, let us go after him. I tried my best to quench his anger ; but I am afraid, now it will flare up again. Let us go after him. [*Exeunt*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A Churchyard*

Enter two **Clowns**, *with spades, etc.*

First Clown. Is she going to be buried in accordance with Christian rites when she put an end to her life with her own hands ?

Sec. Clown. Yes, she is : and so prepare her grave at once. The Coroner has made an inquiry about her death, and he has given has judgment that she should be buried according to Christian rites.

First Clo. How can it be possible if she did not drown herself in order to save herself ?

Sec. Clo. It has been found out to be so.

First Clo. It must be then a case of suicide ; it cannot be anything else. Here is the argument ! If I drown myself of my own accord, it means a conscious act. An action has three parts—acting, doing and performing ; therefore, she drowned herself consciously.

Sec. Clo. No ; just listen to me, good digger.

First Clo. Allow me to speak. Here lies the water ; well, here stands the man ; well, if the man goes near the water and drowns himself, it is, at any rate, an act of suicide. Just consider this carefully. If the water comes near him and drowns him, he cannot be said to commit suicide. Therefore, he who is not responsible for his death does not shorten his life.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Second Clown. But is this law ?

First Clown. Ay, marry, is't ! crowner's quest law.

Second Clown. Will you ha' the truth on't ? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she would have been buried out of Christian burial.

First Clown. Why, there thou say'st : and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christain. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers ; they hold up Adam's profession.

Second Clown. Was he a gentleman ?

First Clown. He was the first that ever bore arms.

Second Clown. Why, he had none.

First Clown. What, art a heathen ? How dost thou understand the Scripture ? The Scripture says, Adam digged ; could he dig without arms ? I'll put another question to thee : if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

Second Clown. Go to.

First Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter ?

Second Clown. The gallows-maker ; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

First Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith : the gallows does well ; but how does it well ? it does well to those that do ill : now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church : argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

Second Clown. "Who builds stronger than a mason, a ship-wright or a carpenter ?"

First Clown. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Second Clown. Marry, now I can tell.

First Clown. To't.

Second Clown. Mass, I cannot tell.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Sec. Clo. But is this the law ?

First Clo. Yes, in the name of Virgin Mary, it is the law of the Coroner or the inquest law.

Sec. Clo. Should I tell you the real fact ? If she had not been a gentlewoman, she would not have been permitted to have her burial according to Christian rites.

First Clo. Yes, you are right ; and it is all the more regretable that the great people should be granted the privilege of committing suicide by drowning or hanging more than their fellow Christians. Let me take up my spade. Gardeners, ditchers and grave diggers are the most primitive people on earth ; they maintain Adam's occupation.

Sec. Clo. Was Adam a gentleman ?

First Clo. He was the first gentleman that carried arms.

Sec. Clo. But, Adam had no arms.

First Clo. You must be a non-Christian ; you do not seem to understand the Bible. The Bible says that Adam used to dig the earth. How could he dig the earth without any weapon ? I shall ask you another question, and if you fail to answer it, you must beg pardon of God for your ignorance about the Bible.

Sec. Clo. Never mind.

First Clo. Who builds things that last the longest ? Is it the mason or the ship-builder or the carpenter ?

Sec. Clo. The gallows-maker : because the gallows last much longer than thousands of the people who are hanged.

First Clo. I really apreciate your intelligence. But how does the gallows last the longest ? It does a good service to those who do ill to others. Now you are doing injustice to say that the gallows last longer than the church : therefore, the gallows may do a good service to you (by hanging you). Let us try the question again.

Sec. Clo. Do you mean the same question, namely, whose work lasts longest—of the mason, the shipwright and the carpenter ?

First. Clo. Yes, answer me that question and stop it.

Sec. Clo. Yes Marry, now I can answer it.

First Clo. Then try it.

Sec. Clo. By Christ, I cannot answer the question.

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Horatio** *at some distance*

First Clo. You need not tax your brain any more about the question because you possess the brains of an ass that cannot improve its pace by beating. And when you are put the same question again say that the grave-digger builds the strongest. The graves which in a grave-digger prepares will last till the world will come to the destruction. Go to Yaunghan and get me a cup of wine.

[*Exit* **Sec. Clo**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Horatio**, *at some distance*

First Clown. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say "a grave maker:" the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit Second Clown*

[*He digs, and sings*

In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
O, methought there was nothing meet.

Hamlet. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave making?

Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Hamlet. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

First Clown. [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intill the land,
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull*

Hamlet. That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once; how the knave jowls it to the ground as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Horatio. It might, my lord.

Hamlet. Or of a courtier; which could say "Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou good lord?" This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it,—might it not?

Horatio. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's, chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade; here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding; but to play at loggats with em? mine ache to think on't.

First Clown. [*Sings*]

A pickaxe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding-sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest it meet,

[*Throws up another skull*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

First **Clown** *digs and sings*

In my younger days, I fell in love. It was so sweet to think of marriage but now I realise that it was not the proper thing to do.

Ham. Has this fellow no felling or sensibilily that he sings while digging the grave ?

Hor. It is the habit that has made him so callous or indifferent to sensibility.

Ham. It is quite right. Those who manual work are incapable of keener sensibilities.

First Clo. (*Sings*) But old age has overtaken me stealthily, and by gripping me fast with its hands has thrown me into the grave as if I had never been a living creature. [*Throws up a skull*

Ham. That skull once could speak and sing. Mark how the fellow knocks it about as if it were the jaw-bone of Cain, the first murderer in the world (who murdered his own brother). This skull my be the head of a politician, who used to try to outwit even God but whom now this ass (the grave-digger) is outwitting !

Hor. Yes, it might be the head of a politician, my lord.

Ham. Or it might be the skull of a courtier who used to say, "Good morning, gentle lord, how do you do, my gentle lord ?" This might be the skull of some lord who used to praise the horse of another lord when the latter wanted to borrow horse from the former. It is not possible ?

Hor. Quite possible, my lord.

Ham. It is undoubtedly possible : but now lady-worm is in possession of the lord's skull : it has become jawless and it is being knocked about by the grave-digger with his spade. What a great change it has passed through if we have intelligence enough to see the change ! Did these bones cost nothing in their upbringing while they were alive that they are now being so much trifled with ? My head spains even to think of it.

First Clo. [*Sings*] To make a grave and receive the guest, a pick-axe, a spade and a winding sheet are necessary.

[*Throws up another skull*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine, of his fines, and the recovery of his recoverises, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box: and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Horatio. Not a jot more, my lord.

Hamlet. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Horatio. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Hamlet. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurrance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

First Clown. Mine, sir.

[*Sings*]. O, a pit of clay for to be made.
For such a guest is meet.

Hamlet. I think it be thine, indeed: for thou liest in't

First Clown. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part, I do not lie in't and yet it is mine:

Hamlet. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

First Clown. 'Tis a quick lie, sir: 'twill away again, from me to you.

Hamlet. What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clown. For no man, sir.

Hamlet. What woman, then?

First Clown. For none, neither.

Hamlet. Who is to be buried in't?

First Clown. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Hamlet. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the lord, Horatio these three years I have taken note of it: the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Here is another skull. It may be the skull of lawyer. His subtle arguments, his quibbles of law (equivocations), his clients, his land tenure laws, and all his tricks have now disappeared with his death. Now he is tolerating a dirty fellow to knock about his skull with a dirty shovel, and he is not bringing any charge of assault against the fellow. Yes, this fellow might have been, while he was alive, a great purchaser of lands who used to deal with bonds, legal documents, confirming a debt, helping a tenant in the transfer of his lands, certifying tenant's ownership of the land, and in recovery of lands from illegal tenants. His clever skull is now filled with earth ;—this is the end he comes to. Nothing is now left of him except scraps of paper that formerly gave him the rights over lands. The heaps of legal papers, which confirm the transfer of lands, cannot find their place in his coffin because now the possessor of lands cannot claim the ownership of anything else except a coffin.

Hor. Not a particle more, my lord.

Ham. Is not a legal document made of sheep-skins ?

Hor. Yes, my lord, it is made of calf-skins too.

Ham. Those people who believe in such sheep-skins and calf-skins are themselves no better than sheep and calves (i. e, fools). I will talk to this fellow. Whose grave is this, my dear fellow ?

First Clo. It is mine, sir ; *[Sings]* because I have to prepare a grave to receive a guest here.

Ham. I think, it is really your grave because you are lying (telling a lie) in this (in connection with this grave).

First Clo. You are lying out of this grave, therefore, it is not your grave, sir. As for myself, although I am not lying in it, yet the grave belongs to me.

Ham. You are lying (telling a lie) in this (this matter) in order to be in the grave, and that is why you claim this to be your grave. But this grave is for one who is dead and not for one who is alive. Therefore, you are lying (telling a lie).

First Clo. It is a quick lie, sir ; and therefore it will quickly pass from me to you.

Ham. For which man you are digging this grave ?

First Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. For which woman, then ?

First Clo. For no woman either.

Ham. Whom are you going to bury here ?

First Clo. A woman, sir, who is dead. May her soul rest in peace !

Ham. How wicked the fellow is ! We must speak very accurately otherwise we shall be misunderstood by our ambiguity. By God, Horatio, for the last three years I have been noticing that people have become extremely cautious in their words so that even a peasant can compete a courtier in expression. How long have you been a grave-digger ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

First Clown. Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet o' ercame Fortinbras.

Hamlet. How long is that since ?

First Clown. Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born : he that is mad, and sent into England.

Hamlet. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

First Clown. Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

Hamlet. Why ?

First Clown. 'Twill not be seen in him there ; there the men are as mad as he.

Hamlet. How came he mad ?

First Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Hamlet. How strangely ?

First Clown. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Hamlet. Upon what ground ?

First Clown. Why, here in Denmark : I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Hamlet. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot ?

First Clown. I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die—as we have many corses now-a-days that will scarce hold the laying in,—he will last you some eight year or nine year : a tanner will last you nine year.

Hamlet. Why he more than another ?

First Clown. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while ; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now ; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

Hamlet. Whose was it ?

First Clown. A mad fellow's it was : whose do you think it was ?

Hamlet. Nay, I know not.

First Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue ! a poured, a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Hamlet. This ?

First Clown. E'en that.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

First Clo. I have been a grave-digger ever since the day our late king Hamlet overthrew Fortinbras.

Ham. How many days have passed since then ?

First Clo. Can you not calculate it. Every fool can count it. It was that very day when young Hamlet was born—who has now gone mad and who has been sent to England.

Ham. Well, why was he sent to England ?

First Clo. Because he was mad. He will get back his senses there, and if he does not, it does not matter.

Ham. Why ?

First Clo. In England nobody will notice his madness because there men are equally mad like him.

Ham. How did he grow mad ?

First Clo. In a very strange manner, the people say.

Ham. In what strange manner ?

First Clo. By losing his senses.

Ham. On what ground did he lose his senses ?

First Clo. Here in Denmark. I have been a grave-digger here for the last thirty years during my boyhood as well as my manhood.

Ham. How long a man can lie in the earth without decomposition ?

First Clo. Indeed, if he is not already rotten before his death—because we receive many dead bodies nowadays which are so rotten that they can be buried with difficulty—he will last about eight or nine years. A tanner will last longer years.

Ham. Why will a tanner last longer than others ?

First Clo. Because his skin is so much tanned by his occupation that for a long time water cannot enter his body. It is water that helps to decompose a dead body. Here is a skull which has been lying in the earth for twenty-three years.

Ham. Whose skull was it ?

First Clo. It was the skull of a fool and a mad man. Whose skull do you think it was ?

Ham. No, I don't know.

First Clo. A curse upon him ; he was a mad rogue. He once poured a bottle of Rhenish wine on my head. This skull belongs to Yorick, the king's jester.

Ham. Is this really the skull of Yorick ?

First Clo. Yes, it is.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Let me see. [*Takes the skull*]. Alas, poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio : a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy : he hath borne me on his back a thousand times ; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is ! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now ? your gambols ? your songs ? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar ? Not one now, to mock your own grinning ? quit chapfallen ? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come ; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Horatio. What's that, my lord ?

Hamlet. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth ?

Horatio. E'vn so.

Hamlet. And smelt so ? pah ! [*Puts down the skull*

Horatio. E'en so, my lord

Hamlet. To what base uses we may return ; Horatio ! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole ?

Horatio. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Hamlet. No, faith, not a jot ; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it : as thus ; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned into dust ; the dust is earth ; of earth we make loam ; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel ?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away :
O, that earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw !
But soft ! but soft ! aside : here comes the king.

Enter **Priests** *etc., in procession* : *the corpse of* **Ophelia**, **Laertes** *and* **Mourners** *following* : **King**, **Queen**, *their trains, etc.*

The queen, the courtiers ; who is this they follow ?
And with such maimed rites ? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life : 'twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark. [*Retiring with* **Horatio**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Let me have a look at it. (*Takes the skull*). Alas ! poor Yorick ! Horatio, I knew him ; he was an excellent wit with a brilliant imagination ; he carried me on his back many a time ; but now, how repulsive is his skull to me ! I feel a nausea when I look at it. Here hung those lips which I kissed several times—I don't remember how many times. Where are you taunts now, your mischievous words, your songs, your brilliant flashes of humour that made all the people round the table burst into peals of laughter ? You have not a single teeth to laugh at your own face now ! Your jaw is also gone. Now go to my lady's toilet room and tell her that however much she may paint her face, she will come to the same fate as this grinning skull. Make her laugh at this skull.

Hor. What is that, my lord ?

Ham. Do you think that Alexander looked like this skull after his death ?

Hor. Quite so.

Ham. Did his skull smell like this ? What a foul smell !

[*Puts down the skull*

Hor. Quite so, my lord.

Ham. To what a hateful condition we come to after our death, Horatio ! Why should we not follow, in our imagination, all the changes that great Alexander had suffered after his death till his body was reduced to dust with which we fill up the hole in a beer-barrel ?

Hor. It would be talking too strange or fanciful a view of the matter.

Ham. No, surely not. We can easily follow the various changes of Alexander without exercising much of our imagination. For example, Alexander first died, then he was put in the grave ; later on, his body was decomposed and turned into dust which is nothing but earth and with which we make clay : and should not this clay be able to stop the hole of a beer-barrel ? Caesar, who was so much feared by all, was converted into clay after his death ; and this clay can surely stop a hole to shut out the wind. Oh, that this creature of dust, who struck terror into the hearts of people and forced their homage, should in the long run, fill in a hole in the wall to shut out the cold wind ! But silence ! Let us step aside ; here comes the king.

Enter **Priests** *etc. in procession* : *the corpse of* **Ophelia, Laertes** *and* **Mourners** *following* ; **King, Queen,** *their trains, etc.*

Here are the queen and the courtiers ; whose dead body is this which is being followed in a funeral procession but with no proper rites ? This shows that the person must have committed suicide, and that it must be a person of position. Let us bend our legs and watch for a while. [*Retiring with* **Horatio.**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laertes. What ceremony else ?

Hamlet. That is Laertes,
A very noble youth : mark.

Laertes. What ceremony else ?

First Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warrantise ; her death was doubtful ;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her :
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laertes. Must there no more be done ?

First Priest. No more be done ;
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laertes. Lay her i' the earth ;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring ! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
when thou liest howling.

Hamlet. What, the fair Ophelia !

Queen. Sweets to the sweet : farewell !

[*Scattering flowers*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife ;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave :

Laertes. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of ! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms

[*Leaps into the grave*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
O blue Olympus.

Ham. [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis ; whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers ? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

[*Leaps into the grave*

Laertes. The devil take thy soul !

[*Grappling with him*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laer. What other funeral rites are to be performed ?

Ham. That is Laertes, a very noble young man ; just look !

Laer. What other ceremony to be observed !

First Priest. Her funeral rites have been performed as far as they have been granted. The manner of her death was suspicious. If the king had not superseded the church laws, she would have been buried in some unholy place and would have remained there till the day of judgment. Instead of offering prayers for the peace of the departed soul, stones and pebbles would have been thrown on her dead body ; but she has been granted the honour of wearing garlands of flowers over her grave which is usually granted to a maiden ; she has been further granted the rites of a Christian burial, particularly the bell and prayers over a holy ground.

Laer. Is that all the ceremony and nothing more to be performed ?

First Priest. We are not permitted to perform any other ceremony. If we go to sing a psalm over her burial, which we usually sing over the grave of other departed souls for their peace in heaven, we shall be insulting the sanctity of a Christian burial for the sake of one who committed suicide.

Laer. Lower her into the grave. May sweet violet flowers blossom over her lovely and spotless body. I tell you, ignorant priest, that my sister will be an angel to watch and tend you when you will be crying in agony in hell.

Ham. What, is it fair Ophelia ?

Queen (*Scattering flowers*). Let sweet flowers mingle with or adorn the lovely body of Ophelia. Farewell ! I expected that you would be my Hamlet's wife and I would scatter flowers upon your bridal bed, and not upon your grave.

Laer. Let the foulest curse fall upon the head of the person who is responsible for your insanity ! Stop throwing earth over the grave for a while. I want to hold my sister once more in my arms. [*Leaps into the grave*

Now throw all the earth upon the living and the dead till you pile it up into a mountain that will tower above Pelion or Olympus both of which almost kiss the sky.

Ham. (*Advancing*). Who is he whose grief is so strongly worded, whose lamentations stop the moving heavenly bodies and make them feel grief and wonder ? This is I, Hamlet, the Dane.

[*Leaps into the grave*

Laer. May the devil possess your soul ! [*Grappling with him*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat ;
For though I am not splenetive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear : hold off thy hand !
King. Pluck them asunder.
Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet !
All. Gentlemen,—
Horatio. Good my lord, be quiet.
[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*
Hamlet. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.
Queen. O my son, what theme ?
Hamlet. I loved Ophelia ! forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her ?
King. O, he is mad, Laertes.
Queen. For love of God, forbear him.
Hamlet. 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do :
Woo't weep ? woo't fight ? woo't fast ? woo't tear thyself ?
Woo't drink up eisel ? eat a crocodile ?
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine ?
To outface me with leaping in her grave ?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I :
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.
Queen. This is mere madness :
And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.
Hamlet. Hear you, sir ;
What is the reason that you use me thus ?
I loved you ever : but it is no matter ;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.
[*Exit*
King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[*Exit Horatio*
[*To Laertes*] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;
We'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son :
This grave shall have a living monument :
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
Till then in patience our proceeding be.
[*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. Your prayer is not holy. Please take off your fingers from my throat. Although I am not irritable and hasty, yet there is some element in me which is dangerous and which you should wisely avoid. Take off your hand.

King. Part them from each other.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet !

All. Gentlemen.....

Hor My good lord, compose yourself.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*

Ham. I will fight a duel with him on this very ground until I die.

Queen. O my son, on what ground ?

Ham. I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers with all their love put together cannot match my love. What are you going to do for her ?

King. O Laertes, he is mad.

Queen. In the name of God, let him alone.

Ham. Damn it ! Tell me what you will do. Will you shed tears ? Will you fight ? Will you go without food and drink ? Will you tear your own body ? Will you drink vinegar or eat a crocodile ? I can do all this. Do you come here to wail or groan ? Do you want to excel me by jumping into her grave ? If you want to be buried alive with her, I can also do the same. And if you talk of piling mountains of earth on you, let them throw millions of acres of earth on us till our ground by touching the flaming sun makes Ossa look like an overgrowth on the human body. If you want to rage and howl, I can also do that.

Queen. This is only madness, and its fits will last only for a short time. Soon he will be quiet like the female dove who becomes quiet as soon as she finds her golden young ones hatched.

Ham. Listen to me, sir ; why do you treat me in this manner ? I always loved you. But it does not matter. Let Hercules (the strongest man) do whatever he likes and yet I will not be cowed down. Even the lesser creatures like dogs and cats follow their nature. [*Exit*

King. Please, good Horatio, attend him. [*Exit* **Horatio** (*To Laertes*) Remember all that I spoke to you last night and hold your patience accordingly. We shall put it into action immediately. Good Gertrude, let your son be watched by some persons. A life-like monument will adorn her grave. We shall soon have peace : but in the meanwhile let us act patiently. [*Exeunt*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *A hall in the Castle*

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Horatio**

Ham. So much for this, sir : now shall you see the other ;
You do remember all the circumstance ?

Horatio. Remember it, my lord :

Hamlet. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep : methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,—
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,
Our idiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall ; and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will,—

Horatio. That is most certain.

Hamlet. Up from my cabin ;
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them : had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again : making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission ; where I found, Horatio,—
O royal knavery !—an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho ! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Horatio. Is't possible ?

Hamlet. Here's the commission : read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed ?

Horatio. I beseech you.

Hamlet. Being thus be-netted round with villainies,—
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play,—I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair :
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning ; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service : wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle*

Enter **Hamlet** *and* **Horatio**

Ham. You have heard this much ; now you will hear the rest. Do you remember all the details ?

Hor. Yes, I do, my lord.

Ham. Sir, in my heart a struggle was going on, which would not let me have any peace of mind. I felt as if I were far more miserable than the rebels in chains. I acted rashly, and I do not regret that I did so. Let us know that sometimes rashness or reckless act serves us better than a well-planned act which often fails or miscarries. This should teach us that there is some hand of fate that produces good result however wrongly or rashly we may be acting.

Hor. That is very true.

Ham. I went out of my cabin, putting on my sea-gown, and in darkness I tried to find them out. My desire was fulfilled : I got the packet of letters, and last of all, I returned to my own cabin. I became unusually bold, and forgetting good manners, broke open the sealed packet. There I found, Horatio, what a scoundrel the king is !—There I found a distinct command to the effect that immediately on reading the king's letter my head should be chopped off. You cannot imagine what kind of arguments the king put forward, what accusations of crimes he made against me, and what a terror he created about my personality, branding me as a menace and scourge to Denmark !

Hor. Is it really possible ?

Ham. Here is the commission given by the king. Read it when you are more free. Would you like to hear how I acted ?

Hor. I entreat you to relate.

Ham. Being thus surrounded with wickedness, my brains began to work before I had thought out my plan. I sat down, drew up a new commission, and wrote it out with a neat hand. Like our statesmen I used to believe formerly that writing a good hand was the sign of low birth, and so, I took sufficient pains to forget good handwriting. But, sir, it helped me a lot. Would you like to know what I wrote ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Horatio. Ay, good my lord.

Hamlet. An earnest conjuration from the king,—
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities ;
And many such-like "as'es" of great charge,—
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd :

Horatio. How was this seal'd ?

Hamlet. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal ;
Folded the writ up in form of the other,
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight, and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Horatio. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't

Hamlet. Why, man, they did make love to this employment.
They are not near my conscience ; their defeat
Doth by their own insinuation grow :
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Horatio. Why, what a king is this !

Ham. Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon,—
He that hath kill'd my king, and stain'd my mother,
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage,—is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm ? and is't not to be damn'd
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil ?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there,

Hamlet It will be short : the interim is mine ;
And a man's life's no more than to say "one"
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself ;
For, by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his : I'll court his favours :
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Horatio. Peace ! who comes here ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hor. Yes, my lord.

Ham. An earnest request from the King of Denmark as England was loyal to him, as ties of friendship may strengthen between denmark and England, or grow between them like the luxuriant palm tree, as peace should produce mental prosperity or advancement and thereby should strengthen their friendly relations—and similar serious but empty statements—that on reading the letter, without any hesitation, the bearers of the letter should be immediately executed without giving them any chance even to confess their sins for their salvation.

Hor. How could you seal the letter ?

Ham. Even in this matter God helped me. I had my father's ring in my purse which was a copy of the Danish seal. I folded the letter just like the other letter, put my signature to it and sealed it, and then put it back into original place with proper care so that nobody suspected that there was any substitution or exchange. Now, the next day we had our sea-fight with the pirates and what happened next, I have already told you.

Hor. So, that is how Guildenstern and Rosencrantz meet their fate.

Ham. They deserved this fate because they loved this kind of job. I do not feel guilty in the least on their account. Their defeat is due to their own inclination. It is dangerous for ordinary persons to come in between two great opponents.

Hor. What a villain the king is !

Ham. Don't you think so ? I am perfectly justified in planning to kill the king who murdered my father, stained my mother, came in between me and my succession to the throne, and made such a foul attempt on my life. Is it not a sin to permit such a great evil (the king) to multiply its race ?

Hor. He will soon come to know from England the result of the mission he had sent out.

Ham. Yes, it will not take much time, but the interval is at my disposal. A man's life is short as a moment. I sincerely regret, Horatio, my bad behaviour to Laertes. I can well imagine his state of mind by seeing my own condition. I shall try to win his goodwill. But surely, the great show of his grief excited jealousy in me and made me so wild.

Hor. Hush ! somebody is coming.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Osric**

Osric. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Hamlet. I humbly thank you, sir. [*Aside to* **Horatio**
Dost know this water-fly ?

Horatio. [*Aside to Hamlet*]. No, my good lord.

Hamlet. [*Aside to Horatio*]. Thy state is the more gracious ; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess ; 'tis a chough ; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osric. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Hamlet. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

Osric. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

Osric. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Hamlet. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion—

Osric. Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head : sir, this is the matter,—

Hamlet. I beseech you, remember—

[*Hamlet moves him to put on his hat*

Osric. Nay, in good faith : for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes ; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing : indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Hamlet. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article ; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable in his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osric. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Hamlet. The concernancy, sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

Osric. Sir ?

Horatio. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue ? You will do't, sir, really.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Gra

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **Osric**

Osric. Your lordship is heartily welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I modestly thank you, sir. Do you know this water-fly. [*Aside*

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. You are fortunate that you don't know him because it is a sin to know such a fellow. He is the owner of many fertile lands. He has no more intelligence than a beast but because of his ownership of lands, he has a place at the king's table (*i. e.*, he dines with the king). He is a jack dow but he is the owner of many foul and filthy things.

Osr. Gentle lord, if your lordship had time, I should like to convey a message to you from the king.

Ham. I shall receive the message, sir, with great diligence. Put on your hat in the proper manner ; it is meant for the head.

Osr. Thank your lordship but it is very hot (and that is why I cannot put the hat on my head).

Ham. No, I should tell you, it is very cold because the wind is blowing from the north.

Osr. It is really somewhat cold, my lord.

Ham. Even then, I think, it is stifling hot, which is not suitable for my temperament.

Osr. It is extremely hot, my lord ; it is really stifling, though I do no know the reason why. But my lord, the king has asked me to inform you that he has put a big stake on your head (life). Sir, this is the message.....

Ham. I would urge you to remember..... [**Hamlet** *moves him to put on his hat*

Osr. My good lord, it is for my comfort that I am not putting on the hat. Sir, Laertes has returned to Denmark very recently. He is a perfect gentleman possessing many distinguishing qualities ; he is of gentle and winning manners. To describe him, I should say that he is the very model of courtesy, because you will find in him all the qualities which a gentleman should possess.

Ham. Sir, the description that you have given of him leaves nothing wanting. It would be taxing the brain and it would also be beyond arithmetic to calculate all his accomplishments and the best calculation would fall short of his various excellences. But to do justice to the description of his qualities, I should say that he is an exceptionally talented person ; and it is only his looking-glass and not any other person or thing that can correctly report all his gifts. Anybody else who goes to describe him would be describing merely his shadow and not his true personality.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most truly about him.

Ham. Leave it, sir. Why should we profane the gentleman with our foul breath (i. e. by describing him with our tongue).

Osr. I don't understand you, sir.

Hor. Is it not possible to understand another person's words ? You will understand him, surely, sir.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman ?
Osric. Of Laertes ?
Horatio. His purse is empty already : all's golden words are spent.
Hamlet. Of him, sir.
Osric. I know you are not ignorant—
Hamlet. I would you did, sir ; yet, in faith. if you did, it would not much approve me ; well, sir.
Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—
Hamlet. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence ; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.
Osric. I mean, sir, for his weapon ; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.
Hamlet. What's his weapon ?
Osric. Rapier and dagger.
Hamlet. That's two of his weapons : but, well.
Osric. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses : against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so : three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.
Hamlet. What call you the carriages ?
Horatio. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.
Osric. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.
Hamlet. The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry cannon by our sides ; I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages : that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this "imponed", as you call it ?
Osric. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits : he hath laid on twelve for nine ; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.
Hamlet. How if I answer no ?
Osric. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.
Hamlet. Sir, I will walk here in the hall : if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me ; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.
Osric. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so ?
Hamlet. To this effect, sir ; after what flourish your nature will.
Osric. I commend my duty to your lordship.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. What is your motive behind mentioning this gentleman ?

Osr. Laertes you mean, my lord ?

Hor. He has exhausted his entire stock of fine phrases.

Ham. Laertes I mean, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant.....

Ham. I wish you did know that I am not ignorant, yet to speak the truth, if you did know, it would not do me much credit, sir. Well, sir, what do you want to say ?

Osr. You must be knowing what an excellent person Laertes is.....

Ham. To confess that I do not know the excellences of Laertes would be as good as comparing myself with him in excellence. To know a man perfectly means knowing oneself correctly.

Osr. Sir, I mean his skill in the use of his weapon. So far the praise of the people about him goes, he is considered as a matchless person.

Ham. What is his weapon ?

Osr. Sword and dagger.

Ham. These are but two of his weapons ; and then ?

Osr. The king, sir, has laid a stake or bet with him for six Barbary horses, against which Laertes has staked, as I am told, six French swords and daggers with all their accessories—girdle straps, etc. three of the carriages most artistically designed which match wonderfully with the hilts.

Ham. What do you mean by carriages ?

Hor. I know that marginal notes would help you in understanding it.

Osr. The carriages are hangers, sir.

Ham. The word would be more suitable if we carried cannons by our sides. Drop the hangers, and go on. You said that the stakes are six Barbary horses against six French swords with all their accessories. So, it seems, it is a French stake againsts a Danish stake. But why this bet was made ?

Osr. According to the king's wager, in a dozen passes between you two, Laertes will win twelve hits against your nine hits ; and hence, Laertes cannot beat you by more than three hits. If your lordship agrees to it, it will be at once arranged.

Ham. What if I say, I don't agree ?

Osr. I mean, my lord, if you accept the challenge.

Ham. Sir, I shall be strolling here in the hall ; this is the hour for my exercise. If the king desires, the swords may be brought ; and if the gentleman (Laertes) is willing and the king sticks to his purpose, I shall try to win the wager for him. If I fail to win it will be my disgrace and I shall receive a few hits.

Osr. Shall I convey the message just as you have said ?

Ham. Yes, sir, you can do it with whatever decoration you want to put on it with your tongue.

Osr. I am at your service, my lord.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Yours, yours. [*Exit Osric*] He does well to commend it himself ; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hamlet. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head. 177

Hamlet. He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy. that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter ; a kind of yesty collection. which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions : and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out. 184

Enter a **Lord**

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall : he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Hamlet. I am constant to my purposes ; they follow the king's pleasure : if his fitness speaks, mine is ready : now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now, 191

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down.

Hamlet. In happy time,

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play. 195

Hamlet. She well instruct me. [*Exit* **Lord**

Horatio. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Hamlet. I do not think so : since he went into France, I have been in continual practice ; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart ; but it is no matter. 201

Horatio. Nay, good my lord,—

Hamlet. It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman. 206

Horatio. If your mind dislike anything, obey it : I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Hamlet. Not a whit ; we defy augury : there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, if it be now ; 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come : the readiness is all : since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes ? 212

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. I am also at your service. (*Exit Osric*). He does well to offer his service of his own accord because none else can offer his service in his own way.

Hor. This lap wing or pewit (Osric) runs away with the hat (shell) on his head.

Ham. He must have begged it of his mother's breast before sucking it. There are many persons like this fellow who are praised by the foolish people of this age and who merely picked up the catch-phrases of the day, the artificial ways of address, which are all empty expressions and by which many foolish and subtle opinions are expressed. The moment you go to put them to the test, they at once fail.

Enter a **Lord**

Lord. My lord, the king sent his greetings to you through Osric, and Osric conveyed the message to the king in return that you would be waiting for the king in the hall. The king has sent me to inquire if you are just ready to have a fencing contest with Laertes or whether you want more time for it.

Ham. I stick to my decision if the king is pleased to stick to his own. If it suits convenience I am quit ready whether it is now or any other time on condition that I am as fit as I am now.

Lord. The king and the queen and all the courtiers are coming down.

Ham. It is quite all right.

Lord. The queen wishes that you should behave towards Laertes in a gentle manner before you take part in the fencing contest.

Ham. I am well advised by her. [*Exit* **Lord**

Hor. You will lose this stake, my lord.

Ham. I do not agree with you because while Laertes has been to France I have been practising fencing regularly. I shall win the stake with all the handicap granted to me. But you don't know how much troubled at heart I am ; but it does not matter.

Hor. No, my good lord.....

Ham. Your missgivings are foolish ; they are more suitable for the mind of a woman.

Hor. If your mind is not inclined to the contest, I will meet and tell them before they reach here that you are not keeping fit.

Ham. Not in the least. I do not care at all for portents. Even a sparrow does not fall from heaven without the will of God. What is ordained to happen now will not happen in future ; and what is ordained to happen in future will not happen now. Readiness is all that matters. As nobody can carry with him what he has to leave behind, it matters little if one has to leave the world (die) early. Let it be as it is.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **King, Queen, Laertes** *and* **Lords**
Osric *and* **Attendants** *with foils and gauntlets ;*
a table and flagons of wine on it.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.
[*The* **King** *puts* **Laertes'** *hand into* **Hamlet's**

Hamlet. Give me your pardon, sir : I have done you wrong :
But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes ? Never Hamlet :
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then ? His madness : if't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd ;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience.
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laertes. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge : but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored. But till that time
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Hamlet. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.

Laertes. Come, one for me,

Hamlet. I'll be your foil, Laertes : in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laertes. You mock me, sir.

Hamlet. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager ?

Hamlet. Very well, my lord :
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Enter **King, Queen, Laertes** *and* **Lords**
Osric *and* **Attendants** *with foils and gauntlets ;*
a table and flagors of wine on it.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and let me offer this (Laertes') hand to you.

[*The* **King** *puts* **Laertes,** *hand into* **Hamlet's**

Ham. Pardon me, sir ; I have wronged you ; but as you are a gentleman, you should pardon me. Those who are present here know and you also must have come to know by now how much I am troubled at heart. By your good and honourable nature you can judge that my behaviour was due to my madness. It was not Hamlet who wronged you.....it was never Hamlet. If Hamlet is not himself and if he does any wrong to you, it is not Hamlet who wrongs you. When Hamlet says that he has done you no wrong then it cannot be Hamlet but it is his madness. If this be true then Hamlet has done wrong to himself and therefore Hamlet's madness is his own enemy. Sir, in the presence of all persons who are assembled here if I am denying my intention of doing any wrong to you, you should forgive me out of your generosity. Just take it that I have shot an arrow over my own house and shot my own brother.

Laer. I am satisfied so far as my motive of taking revenge upon my father's death is concerned ; but so far as my honour is concerned I will not compromise it unless and until some elderly persons of honour and position assure me that my honour is quite uninjured. In the meanwhile, I accept your love and I assure you that I will not dishonour it.

Ham. I welcome it with all my heart ; and I will play this brotherly contest in fencing with you for the stake that has been put upon it. Give us the swords, come on.

Laer. Let me also have a sword.

Ham. I shall be a foil to you in fencing, Laertes. As compared to my skill in fencing, your skill will shine like a star in darkness and will emit the flame of glory.

Laer. You are taunting me, sir.

Ham. No, I assure you by my hand that I am not mocking.

King. Give them the swords, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet, you know the stake ?

Ham. Quite well, my lord. Your lordship has put the stake on the weaker man.

King. I have no doubt about the stakes. I know the skill of you both, but because he has improved in skill, I have given you the handicap of three hits over him.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laertes. This is too heavy, let me see another.
Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length ?
[*They prepare to play*

Osric. Ay, my good lord.
King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire ;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
And in the cup an union shall he throw.
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups,
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without.
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
"Now the king drinks to Hamlet." Come, begin ;
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Hamlet. Come on, sir.
Laertes. Come, my lord. [*They play*
Hamlet. One.
Laertes. No.
Hamlet. Judgment.
Osric. A hit, a very palpable hit.
Laertes. Well ; again.
King. Stay ; give me drink. Hamlet this pearl is thine ! Here's to thy health.
[*Trumpets sound, and common shot off within*
Give him the cup.

Hamlet. I'll play this bout first ; set it by awhile.
Come. [*They play*] Another hit : what say you ?
Laertes. A touch, a touch, I do confess.
King. Our son shall win.
Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows :
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.
Hamlet. Good madam !
King. Gertrude, do not drink.
Queen. I will, my lord ; I pray you, pardon me
[*Drinks*

King. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup ; it is too late.
Hamlet. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by and by.
Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.
Laertes. My lord, I'll hit him now.
King. I do not think't.
Laer. [*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost' gainst my conscience.
Hamlet. Come, for the third, Laertes : you but dally
I pray you, pass with your best violence ;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laer. This sword is too heavy ; let me have another

Ham. This sword suits me all right. Are all these swords of the same length ?

[*They prepare to play*

Osr. Yes, my good lord.

King. Place the goblets of wine upon that table. If Hamlet gives the first or the second hit or pays back Laertes in the third round of passes, let the guns fire from the ramparts. The king will drink to him so that he (Hamlet) may gain in his power of resistance, and he will put into the cup a pearl (in reality a strong pill of poison) which is richer than any other pearl worn by four successive kings of Denmark in their crown. Give me the cups. Let the kettle-drum sound along with the trumpet, let the trumpet blow in response to the firing guns, and let the cannons roar to the sky proclaiming from heaven to earth. "Now the king drinks to Hamlet". Now, let the contest begin ; and let the judges keep a sharp watch.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come on, my lord. [*They play*

Ham. One hit.

Laer. No.

Ham. Let the judges declare.

Osr. It is a hit, and there is no doubt about it.

Laer. Well, let's play again.

King. Stop : give me the drink. Hamlet, this pearl is yours. I drink your health.

[*Trumpets sound and cannons shot off within*

Give him the cup.

Ham. Let me play this round first ; so, let the drink wait for a while. Come. (*They play*) Another hit. What do you say ?

Laer. It is merely a touch, not a hit.

King. Our son (Hamlet) will win.

Queen. He is flabby, and therefore loses his breath easily. Here, Hamlet, take my handkerchief and wipe your forehead. The queen drinks to your good luck, Hamlet.

Ham. Thank you, madam.

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. Excuse me, my lord ; I will drink.

King. (*Aside*). It is the poisoned cup ; it is now too late to save her.

Ham. It is now safe as yet to drink but I shall drink soon.

Queen. Come, I will wipe your face.

Laer. My lord, I will hit him now.

King. I don't think, you can.

Laer. (*Aside*) And yet my conscience forbids me to hit.

Ham. Come for the third bout, Laertes. You are not playing seriously. Please try your hardest thrust. I am afraid, you are not taking me seriously.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Laertes. Say you so ? come on. [*They play*

Osric. Nothing, neither way. 289

Laertes. Have at you now !

[**Laertes** *wounds* **Hamlet** : *then in scuffling they change rapiers and* **Hamlet** *wounds* **Laertes**

King. Part them ; they are incensed

Hamlet. Nay, come, again. [*The Queen falls*

Osric. Look to the queen there, ho !

Horatio. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord ?

Osric. How is't, Laertes ?

Laertes. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric ;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery. 295

Ham. How does the queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—The drink, the drink !—I am poison'd. [*Dies*

Hamlet. O villiany ! Ho ! let the door be lock'd :
Treachery ! seek it out. 300

Laertes. It is here, Hamlet : Hamlet, thou art slain ;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour of life ;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd : the foul practice 305
Hath turn'd itself on me ; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again : thy mother's poison'd :
I can do more : the king, the king's to blame.

Hamlet. The point envenom'd too ! 309
Then, venom, to thy work. [*Stabs the King*

All. Treason ! treason !

King. O, yet defend me, friends ; I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion : is thy union here ?
Follow my mother. [*King dies*

Laertes. He is justly served : 315
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet ;
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me ! [*Dies*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS:MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Lear. Do you say like that ? Come on. [*They play*

Osr. No hit on any side.

Laer. Now I hit you.

[**Laertes** *wounds* **Hamlet** ; *then, in scuffling they change rapiers and* **Hamlet** *wounds* **Laertes**

King. Separate them. They are inflamed with anger.

Ham. No, come again. [*The Queen falls*

Osr. Take care of the queen there, ho !

Hor. Both of them are bleeding. How is it with you, my lord ?

Osr. How is it with you, Laertes ?
I have been caught in my trap, Osric. I have been justly punished for my treachery.

Ham. How is the queen ?

King. She has fallen unconscious because she has seen them bleeding.

Queen. No, no, it is due to the drink—O my dear. Hamlet.
It is due to the drink ! I am poisoned ! [*Dies*

Ham. O treachery ! Ho ! let all the doors be locked. I will find it out.

Laer. The treachery in me, Hamlet. You are killed. No medicine on earth can help you. You have only half an hour to live. The instrument of treachery is in your hand because it is poisoned. My villainy has recoiled on me. See, here I am lying never to rise again. Your mother is also poisoned. I cannot speak any more. The king is the real root of all this.

Ham. The point of the sword is poisoned. So, let the poison do its work. [*Stabs the King*

All. Treason ! Treason !

King. Help me, my friends, I have only been injured.

Ham. Here, you incestuous, murderous, wicked Dane, drink this poison. Let this union (the pearl of poison) the unholy marriage carry you to my mother. [*King dies*

Laer. He has been rightly punished. It is a poison prepared by himself. Let us forgive each other, noble Hamlet. I will no longer accuse you of my father's or my own death nor should you accuse me of your own death. [*Dies*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet. Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu !
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time,—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest.—O, I could tell you,—
But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead ;
Thou livest : report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Horatio. Never believe it :
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane :
Here's yet some liquor left.

Hamlet. As thou'rt a man
Give me the cup : let go ; by heaven, I'll have't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain.
To tell my story.

[*March at some distance, and shot within*

What warlike noise is this ?

Osric. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Hamlet. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit :
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurrents more and less,
Which have solicited the rest is silence. [*Dies*

Horatio. Now cracks a noble heart : good night, sweet prince ;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !
Why does the drum come hither ? [*March within*

Enter **Fortinbras** *the English Ambassadors and others*

Fortinbras. Where is this sight ?

Horatio. What is it ye would see ?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fortinbras. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud Death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ham. May God spare you from the blame of my death ? I shall also die. I am killed, Horatio. Miserable Queen, farewell ! You silent witnesses of this tragic scene, who shudder and grow pale at the sight of all these bloody deeds, if I had been spared a few moments more, but no, I am now in the grip of death, I could relate to you everything, but it cannot be. Horatio, I am killed ; but you will live ; so give a true account of me and explain my position correctly to those who will demand an explanation.

Hor. Never think that I shall remain alive when you are dead. I am more like the ancient Roman than a Dane. Here is some poisoned drink left.

Ham. If you are a man, please give me the cup. I will drink it. O good Horatio, what a bad name I shall leave behind, if the things, as they are, are not explained properly. If you ever had any love for me, please abstain from the joy of dying for some time, and try to live in this world of wickedness till you have explained the story of my life.

[*March afar off and shot within*

What warlike noise is this ?

Osr. Young Fortinbras is returning victorious from Poland and is greeting the ambassadors of England with the report of the guns.

Ham. O Horatio ! I am dying. The powerful poison has now overpowered my spirit. I shall not live long enough to receive any news from England. But let me tell you that Fortinbras is going to be elected as the King of Denmark. I vote for his election in my dying moment. So, tell this, and also all that has happened, in all possible details, and how I have been driven to these acts. The rest will be covered by my death. [*Dies*

Hor. Now dies a noble heart. Good night, dear prince, let angels sing your praise and lull you to eternal sleep ! Why is the music of the drum drawing near ? [*March within*

Enter **Fortinbras** *and the English Ambassadors, with drum, colours and Attendants.*

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What do you want to see ? If you want to see any spectacle of sorrow or wonder, better see here.

Fort. This heap of dead bodies looks like a great slaughter in revenge. O proud Death ! What feast you are going to make in your boundless realm that you have killed so cruelly such a number of princes !

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

First Ambassador. The sight is dismal ;
And our affairs from England come too late :
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :
Where should we have our thanks ?

Horatio. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you :
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view ;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about : so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause ;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventor's heads : all this can I
Truly deliver.

Fortinbras. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Horatio. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw no more :
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild ; lest more mischance
On plots and errors, happen.

Fortinbras. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally : and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies : such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies : after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

First Amb. The sight is most tragic. We have arrived too late from England with our mission, because the ears that would have listened to our message are now dead. We have come to tell the king that his command has been carried out.....that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. Who will thank us now ?

Hor. You would not have received thanks from the king even if he were alive because he did not order the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. As you from Poland and you from England are here by accident to witness this tragic scene, you should better order that these dead bodies may be put upon a stage, open to the gaze of the people ; and then, I should relate, how all these things occurred, to those who do not know anything about them. So you will hear how bloody and cruel acts, accidental and treacherous deaths, wicked and foul designs and intrigues—how all these unforeseen tragic things have happened, how the inventors of treacherous plots as well as their victims have met their fate.

Fort. Let us hear the story as soon as possible, and let us call all the most honourable and noble personalities to see and listen. As for myself, in great sadness of heart I accept my fortune. As far as I remember, I have got some claims upon this kingdom, which the favourable occasion invites me to put forward.

Hor. So far as your claims are concerned, I shall speak about them, and the dying voice of Hamlet will speak more. But before that let our duty to Hamlet be immediately performed, lest more mishaps, more blunders and more plots are committed ; hatched and brought about because the minds of the people are greatly distracted by all that has happened.

Fort. Let your captain carry the dead body of Hamlet with full military honours because if he had succeeded to the throne, he would have proved to be a great king. And while carrying his body to the stage (or for burial) let him be honoured with martial music and all other rites due to a great soldier. Lift up the dead bodies ; such a scene suits a battlefield but not a place like this. Go and order the soldiers to fire the guns.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the bodies ; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

NOTES

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

ACT I

SCENE I

Summary of the Scene :

The first Scene of the first Act is the scene of exposition. It is a kind of prologue to the whole action. Summarising this scene Schucking says : "The play begins at midnight on the ramparts of the castle of Elsinore. Hamlet's friend, Horatio, has arranged to meet the two officers, Marcellus and Bernardo, in order to test the truth, of their story of the ghost's appearances, in which he does not believe. As Bernardo is recounting the happenings of the previous night, the ghost again appears. Doubt is no longer possible : it is the late king who, in full armour, solemnly stalks past. Horatio, terror-struck at the sudden apparition, quickly masters himself and speaks to it. But the ghost disappears. Horatio believes that the visitation is due to the warlike threat directed against the Danish State by the young Norwegian Fortinbras, and calls to mind the fearful portents that heralded the fall of Julius Caesar. While he is discussing the subject with his friend, the ghost returns. Although Horatio knows there is danger in so doing, he adresses it once more. Pity for the lot of apparition and anxiety for his country urge him to implore the ghost to speak, but the latter, though apparently about to do so, suddenly departs as the cock crows. The three men, trying to bar its way, lose their heads and strike at it with a halberd : but the apparition, as if to fool them, appears first in one place, then in another, and, a moment later, is gone. All three, overcome by the extraordinary occurrence, stay on, discussing tales concerning the strange power exercised over apparitions by cock-crow, until Horatio notices that dawn is near. They then break off with the suggestion that they should acquaint Prince Hamlet with what has taken place."

Critical Comments :

The opening scene in every play of Shakespeare is a scene of very great dramatic importance. This opening scene, like the first scene in *Macbeth*, "strikes the keynote of the character of the whole drama. "The element of mystery and suspense that pervades *Hamlet* is introduced from the very outset. The scene and setting are carefully adjusted to suit the introduction of the supernatural element.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Coleridge says that "the armour, the dead silence, the watchfulness that first interrupts it, the welcome relief of the guard, the cold,..... ...all excellently accord with, and prepare for, the after gradual rise into tragedy." Coleridge continues to say that "a state of cold or chilling damp from without, and of anxiety inwardly", such a state as the dramatist here depicts in the soldiers on guard, is that in which human nature is most susceptible to the idea of supernatural manifestations. The whole scene vibrates with the thrill and hush of mystery. Commenting upon the dramatic importance of this scene Schucking says : "This scene, which is treated at some length, almost as though it were a prologue, could, from the point of view of the exposition, have been replaced by a few lines stating the facts. Marcellus plays no further part in the action, and Horatio a comparatively small one. The various conjectures as to the reason for the ghost's appearance turn out to be wrong. But Shakespeare, eager as usual to make the most of the dramatic possibilities of a good scene, is unwilling to shorten it in the interest of the general construction of the play. Every point is therefore skilfully developed in order to yield its full emotional value. Fear of the supernatural, so strong that men who are by no means cowards lose their presence of mind, even infects the spectators ; and their interest in what is to come is quickened. The mention of Caesar's death, one of the most pregnant events in world history, is a presage of fateful events."

NOTES

2. **Me**—emphatic ; it is for the watch to challenge any one who appears, not for him to challenge the watch. **Unfold yourself**—declare who you are.

3. **Long live the king**—Malone supposed this to be the watch-word, but Delius points out that Horatio and Marcellus, when similarly challenged, give another answer, and Pye believes that Bernardo's answer corresponds to the former usage in France, where to the common challenge Qui vive ? (who goes there) the answer was Vive le Roi ! (long live the king !), like the modern answer, 'A friend'.

6. **You come.....hour**—you have come with exact punctuality to your time.

7. **Now**—just this moment.

8. **Much**—great in quantity, formerly used of size also. **Bitter**—bitterly.

9. **Sick at heart**—heartily weary, thoroughly exhausted, with watching in such weather.

10. **Have you.....guard** ? has your watch been undisturbed by any alarm ?

13. **Rivals**—partners, associates.

15. **Ground**—soil, land. **Liegemen**—subjects. **The Dane**—the king of Denmark, Claudius, uncle to the Prince.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

16. **Give you good night**—i. e. God give you, etc.

19. **A piece of him**—a bantering answer to Bernardo's surprise ; as one might say, 'Well, it looks like it'.

21. **What, has to-night** ?—The quartos give this speech to Horatio ; and many editors follow them on the ground that Marcellus would not use the contemptous expression. **This thing**—of that which he immediately afterwards calls "this dreaded sight", while in the mouth of the sceptical Horatio such contempt would be quite appropriate. Grant White objects that Horatio does not yet believe that the Ghost has appeared at all ; but in his mouth the words needs not mean more than 'has your imagination again been conjuring up this apparition you told me of ?'

23. **Fantas**—fancy.

24. **And will.....him**—and refuses to yield himself to belief.

25. **Dreaded**—dreadful.

27. **The minutes of this night**—indicating the tediousness, and perhaps the closeness, of the watch they were to keep.

29. **Tush**—an exclamation of impatient incredulity. **Awhile**—for a time.

31-3. **And let us.....seen**—and let us, in the endeavour to convince you, once more attack your ears that so resolutely refuse to listen with belief, by telling you what for two nights together we have seen.....

33. **Sit we down**—what if we sit down ?

35. **Last night of all**—only last night.

36-8. **When yond.....burns**—when what very star which you see to the west of the pole had travelled along its path to light up that part of the heavens in which it is now shining i. e. almost at this very time last night. **Had.....illume**—had not caused its course to light up, but, proceeded on its course with the object of lighting up.

39. **Beating**—much the same as 'tolling', but more vividly indicating the harsh clangour of the bell as heard in the deep stillness of midnight.

40. **Break thee off**—cease speaking.

41. **In the same figure**—in the same shape and dress.

42. **Thou art a scholar**—the usual form of exorcism being in Latin, a scholar would be required for the purpose.

43. **The king**—i e. the dead king, Hamlet's father.

44. **Harrows**—confounds. paralyzes.

45. **It would be spoke to** – it desires to be spoken to. "There was, and is, a notion that a ghost cannot speak till it has been spoken to".

46-9. **What art thou.....march** ?—of what nature are you that without right you claim it as the time for your walking these peaceful hours of the night, and with equal want of right assume the noble and warlike form in which the majestic sovereign of this land was

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

wont to walk when alive ? **Denmark**—the king of Denmark ; the name of the country being frequently used by Shakespeare in this way. **Sometimes**—formerly ; in which as in other senses, Shakespeare uses 'sometimes' and 'sometime' indifferently.

50. **Stalks**—strides with a slow and stately step ; to walk warily.

52. **Will not**—is determined not to.

53. **How now.....pale**—said with ironical surprise.

54. **Is not.....fantasy** ?—now that the apparition has so terrified you, you will hardly again charge us with being under a delusion.

56. **Before my God**—I speak in the presence of my God and call upon Him to witness that, etc.

57-8. **Without.....eyes**—had it not been vouched for by the certain warrant of my visual sanse, had not the appeal been made to my senses, and made in a way about which there could be no mistake.

60. **Such**—not necessarily the very armour, but armour closely resembling it.

61. **Combated**—met in personal combat ; the verb is now used in a figurative sense only.

62. **When, in an angry parle**—when, on the occasion of a conference which ended in angry words. **Parle**—and parley are elsewhere used by Shakespeare only of a friendly conference, or a conference held with the view or coming to an agreement, and we can hardly suppose blows to have been exchanged while the parle was going on.

63. **The sledded Polacks**—the poles fighting from their sledges ; it is not of course necessary to suppose that all the Polish army was in sledges, the word slegded being used merely as a graphic touch : "Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland" (Johnson).

65. **Jump at this dead hour**—just at this very hour of dead stillness.

66. **Gone by our watch**—passed by us then keeping watch.

67-9. **In what.....state**—though of many lines of thought I do not know which one would, if explored, show the particular danger threatened, the general drift of my opinion is to foreshadow some strange outbreak which shall shake our state. **Eruption**—here meaning violent disturbance.

70. **Good now**—very well, then. **Tell me.....knows**—let him who knows tell me.

71-2. **Why this.....land**—why, night after night, the king's subjects are worn out by their vigilance so trictly observed, with which we have all become so familiar.

73. **And why.....cannon**—and why, day after day, the casting o fcannon proceeds without interruption.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

74. **And foreign.....war**—and why there is this constant trade with foreign countries for the purchase of, etc.

75-6. **Why such.....week**—why shipwrights are compelled to work in the docks week-days and sundays.

76-7. **What might.....day**—what can possible be in preparation that all this heavy labour goes on day and night.

80. **The whisper goes so**—it is whispered that the reason of all this is such as I will relate to you.

81. **Image**—semblance ; not elsewhere used by Shakespeare of a ghostly appartion.

84. **Thereto.....pride**—he being goaded to do so by a spirit of strong emulation.

84. **Dared**—challenged ; in the sense of venturing to do a thing.

85. **For so**—I say 'valiant', for so he was accounted, etc.

This side.....world—the inhabitants of the portion of the world that is known to us.

87. **Well ratified.....heraldry**—"Law would be wanted to draw up accurately the contract, heraldry to give it a binding force in honour ; as the court of chivalry has cognizance of contracts touching deeds of arms or of war out of the realm" (Moberly).

88. **With his life**—when forfeiting, losing, his life. **Those his lands**—those lands of his.

89. **Which he.....of**—of which he was at the time possessed. **Seized**—to put one in possession of, to take possession of, a technical term in law still in use.

91. **Gaged**—pledged, staked.

91-2. **Which had.....Fortinbras**—and this would have gone as an inheritance to Fortinbras ; would have passed into his possession.

93-5. **As, by the same.....Hamlet**—in the same way that, by the agreement of which I have spoken, and the tenour of the stipulation formally drawn up between them, his possessions passed to Hamlet. **Young Fortinbras**—the son of king Hamlet's opponent.

96. **Of unimproved.....full**—of fiery and full-blooded courage that has not yet been disciplined in action.

97. **Skirts**—the outlying districts where there would be plenty of young fellows ready for any employment ; used much in the way that we speak of the 'purlieus', and Shakespeare of the 'suburbs' of a city, where the refuse of society is gathered together. **Here and there**—in all directions.

98. **Shark'd up**—greedily swept up, as the shark voraciously sweeps up all prey that comes in its way. **A list**—a gang ; literally, catalogue. **Lawless resolutes**—wild-blooded young fellows ready for any enterprise however desperate and unjustifiable.

99. **For food and diet**—merely for their keep, caring nothing about being paid.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

100. **That hath.....in't**—such as has plenty of resolution in it, one that indicates a determined purpose. **Which is no other**—and this enterprise is nothing else than.

101. **As it.....state**—for so it plainly appears to our rulers.

102. **Of us**—from us.

102-3. **By strong.....compulsative**—by force of arms, and on compulsory conditions ; i. e. not on terms of agreement such as had been entered into between Hamlet and the elder Fortinbras.

104. **So**—in the way I have already described. **I take it**—I understand.

106-7. **The chief.....land**—the main spring, origin, of all this hurry and bustle which we see throughout Denmark.

108. **I think.....so**—I think that this and no other must, as you say, be the cause of all this bustle.

109-10. **Well may it.....watch**—quite in keeping with such a state of things is it that this ominous apparition should pass through our midst when keeping watch, itself clad in armour as through prepared for battle.

111. **That was.....wars**—whose action was, and still is, the subject of these wars, both past and now brewing between the two countries.

112. **A mote.....eye**—it (Sc. the apparition) like a mote in the eye, which, minute as it is, causes that organ infinite pain, perplexes and molests our mental sight. **Mote**—a particle of dust, speck.

113. **In the most.....Rome**—when Rome was at its height of power and glory ; the palm was an emblem of victory. But it is the time rather than the place which is here indicated ; and the meaning is just as was the case with Rome when at the zenith of its power, so with us who have reached a higher point than at any previous time, omens give warning of approaching troubles.

114. **Mightiest**—supremely mighty ; not mightiest of all that bore that name.

115. **Stood tenantless**—opened and gave up their dead. **Sheeted dead**—corpses clad in the winding-sheet, or shroud, in which they had been buried.

116. **Squeak**—squeal, cry out in a shrill tone as if in anguish ; gibber, gabble, talk in unintelligible language.

117-8. **As stars.....sun**—In this corrupt passage various emendations and transpositions have been proposed, but probably a line, or more than one line, has dropoed out. Malone suggests Astres, an old synonym for star, and with this word, taking it in the sense, of a spot of light. **Disasters**—in the sense of spots of darkness, spots on the sun's disc, is contrasted. **The moist star**—the moon.

119. **Upon whose.....stands**—which governs the ebb and flow of the tides.

120. **Was sick almost.....eclipse**—was sick almost to death with the long and entire eclipse it suffered ; was so long in a state of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

complete eclipse as to seem almost doomed to perish. **Doomsday**—the day of doom or judgment, especially the day of the last judgment, on which the general doom will be pronounced ; but here the day of death.

121. **And even.....events**—and the precisely similar signs foreruning terrible events.

122. **Harbingers**—literally a forerunner ; an officer in the royal household, whose duty it was to allot the lodgings of the king's attendants in a royal progress. **Still**—constantly. **The fates**—what was fated, destined, to happen.

123. **Prologue.....on**—prologue to the disastrous events to be enacted here.

124. **Together**—*i. e.* the heaven by comets, eclipses, etc., the earth by the appearance of ghosts.

125. **Climatures**—properly the influence of climate in its original sense of distance from the equator, but here apparently for the different regions of the land.

126. **But soft**—but hold, stop ; said to himself as much as to those he is addressing.

127. **I'll cross it..... me**—I will walk across its path, intercept it, even though the result should be that it blast me ; an allusion to the old belief that any one crossing, or being crossed by, a spirit came under its baneful influence.

Illusion—the sceptical Horatio still refuses to acknowledge the reality of the apparition.

128. **If thou.....voice**—if you are capable of making yourself heard in any way, or of using speech.

130-1. **If there be.....me**—if your appearance here means that there is any good deed to be done whereby you will be relieved and which it will be to my credit to do.

133. **If thou.....fate**—if you have some knowledge (obtained by means to which we have no success) of what destiny hangs over your country.

134. **Which, happily.....avoid**—foreknowledge of which may perhaps enable us to avoid. **Happily**—for haply, *i. e.* by hap, chance is frequent in Shakespeare. Some editors take the word in its more ordinary sense, explaining which happy, or fortunate, foreknowledge may avoid ; but the former sense seems more in accordance with the sceptical mind of Horatio.

136-8. **Or if.....death**—or if while living you have hoarded up, by burying it in the earth, treasure unjustly wrung from its owners, an offence for which men say, spirits like yourself are often condemned to wander up and down the earth.

140. **Partisan**—a kind of halberd, or long-handled axe, a weapon borne by foot-soldiers.

141. **Will not stand**—refuses to halt when called upon to do so.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

143-4. **We do it.....violence**—it is an insult on our part to make an attempt to offer violence to one so majestical in form and carriage.

145-6. **for it.....mockery**—I say 'show of violence', for it, like the air, is invulnerable, and our blows thus spent in vain are but the merest mockery of enmity. **For invulnerable**—cp. Mach. v. 8-9, "As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air with thy keen sword impress as make me bleed" : Temp. iii. 3.52-4, "as well Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd—at stabs kill the still closing waters". **Vain blows**—blows made vain by the fact of the apparition being invulnerable.

147. **The cock**—Farmer quotes Bourne's Antiquities of the common People, "It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cock-crowing the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions and go to their proper places. Hence it is that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go cheerfully to work at that time.

149. **Upon a fearful summons**—immediately upon hearing a summons tha it dreads.

150. **The trumpet to the morn**—which summons the morning to awake as the trumpeter summons sleeping soldiers.

151. **Lofty**—high-sounding, "Sound all the lofty instruments of war" ; but also perhaps with an allusion to the cock throwing up its head when crowing.

154. **Extravagant**—stalking abroad ; used in its literal sense.

155. **His confine**—the hanitstion to which it was restricted except during the hours of night sc. the regions of the dead.

155-6. **And of the truth.....probation**—and of the truth of this belief this object, a moment ago present to our sight, gave proof in disappearing at the cock's crow.

157. **Faded**—faded away, gradually vanished ; cp. Temp. iv 1.155, "And like this insubstantial pageant faded. Leave not a rack behind". **On the crowing of the cock**—when the cock crowed.

158. **Gainst.....comes**—in anticipation of the coming of that time.

162. **No planets strike**—a reference to the old astrological belief in the malignant influence of the stars.

163. **Takes**—strikes with disease.

164. **So gracious**—so touched with heavenly grace.

165. **In part**—partly ; the sceptical Horatio will not admit it unreservedly.

166. **In russet mantle clad**—dressed in roseate, or ruddy, hues ; the personification of the morning is carried on in **Walks** in the next line—Cp. Milton, P. L. v. 1, "Now morn her rosy steps in the eastern clime advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearls".

167. **Eastern**—is preferred by most modern editors to eastward, the reading of the quartos, as being more in accordance with the poetical phraseology of the time.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

168-9. **And by my.....impart**—and, if you will take my advice let us, etc. Apparently a mixture of constructions between 'by my advice do you impart', and 'if you agree with my advice, let us impart'.

170. **Upon my life**—*i. e.* I am ready to stake my life upon the certainty of the spirit doing as I say.

171. **Dumb to us**—though dumb to us, or, which was dumb to us ; referring to the near relationship of father and son.

173. **As needful.....duty** ?—as being a thing which the love we all bear to him renders necessary, and one to which our loyal duty makes becoming in us.

174. **I pray**—I strongly urge you.

175. **Where we.....conveniently**—where conveniently for our purpose we may make sure of finding him.

ACT I

SCENE II

Summary of the Scene

This scene takes us to the Danish Court. This is in sharp contrast with the first scene of midnight apparition. Here Claudius holds his first court. His Councillors, splendidly attired, are headed by Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain. Claudius reviews broadly the major problems of the country. At the very outset, he explains, without any apparent embarrassment or reserve, his delicate position in mourning his brother's death and publicly declaring his marriage with his late brother's widow. With remarkable impunity he passes over this and draws the attention of his Councillors to the impending danger of an invasion by Norway. In giving clear and intelligent orders, in his courteous manners towards those about him, and in his serious words to the Ambassadors he appear in every way fitted for his high position. Towards Laertes, the son of Polonius, he is friendly and benevolent. Laertes prepares to go back to Paris.

Claudius then turns to Hamlet and diplomatically shows special warmth towards him, dwelling on what is now their double relationship. When the king expresses concern at his dejection, Hamlet satirically twists his word and says that the splendour of the Court distresses him. The Queen, his mother, intervenes and implores him to cease mourning the death of his father, for death comes to all. Hamlet gets irritated and sarcastically upbraids his mother. However, Claudius and the Queen both try to propitiate Hamlet and implore him to give up his intention of going back to his university of Wittenburg. Hamlet reluctantly agrees to stay. The king and Queen praise the Prince for this decision and order that this shall be celebrated by the discharge of cannons during the banquet.

In the second half of the scene Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo come to meet Hamlet. Horatio tells Hamlet of the appearance of his father's ghost. Hamlet is very deeply perturbed.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

He wants to hear every detail and, cross-examining Horatio, even enquires what was the hue and expression of the king's face. He eagerly wants to see the apparition with his own eyes. He asks his friends to show him the ghost that very night, and at the same time administers to them a solemn oath never to make any mention of the ghost, direct or indirect, to anybody.

Critical Comments

This is a very crowded scene. Here is a very brilliant scene of the Danish Court. The dominating figure of the king takes the foremost place. His villainy is gradually but imperceptibly revealed. "His villainy, in fact, is hardly discernible, appearing, only in a certain hypocritical amiability towards those about him, strongly reminiscent of another murderer and usurper, Macbeth." (Schucking) Claudius's thoughts evidently run on similar lines, but Shakespeare tries to throw over them a garb of hypocritical disguise Verity says, "uneasiness and insincerity try instinctively to disguise themselves in artificial, highflown language, as in the first part of Claudius's speech. When he passes from the difficult, personal theme and speaks of the affairs of his kingdom, then we note a simpler tone and a certain appropriate majesty."

The scene also offers for the first time a deep insight into the character of Hamlet. In the first scene the name of Hamlet was only casually mentioned. Here he comes on the stage for the first time. He has already received a terrible moral and emotional shock. Schucking says ; "The shock of his mother's overhasty remarriage has filled him with desperation. The moral order in which he believed has been destroyed. If within two months his mother can transfer her love from a husband so noble as her first to one so worthless as her second, what meaning can life hold for him any more ? The first soliloquy is perhaps the most important in the whole play for an understanding of Hamlet's character, because it shows us what he was like before the ghost appeared and laid so heavy a charge upon him. We see in Hamlet one who has been very deeply shaken. He is a man of high moral ideals : for if he had not possessed a profound faith in mankind, combined with the strongest impulse towards what is good, he could never have been so greatly disillusioned. It is clear that Hamlet, however deeply he may suffer, is not the kind to bear a great misfortune silently and with resignation : he kicks against the pricks, and his opinions are affected by his irritation." His surprising volcanic outburst in the court denotes the white heat within.

Notes

1. **Hamlet our dear brother's**—a many-worded term, as though hyphened together.
2. **Green**—fresh in our minds.
3. **To bear.....grieft**—to show by the way in which we carried our hearts that they were borne down by a load of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

sorrow. The figure is from the carriage of the body when bearing a burden.

3, 4. **And our whole.....woe**—and that it befitted our subject universally to wear the look of woe which the brow wears when contracted with physical pain.

5. **Discretion**—politic consideration **Nature**—natural inclination.

6, 7. **That we.....ourselves**—that we, while thinking of him, do so in such a way as wisdom dictates, and at the same time with a recollection of what is for our own well-being.

8. **Our sometime sister**—she who was formerly our sister-in-law.

9. **The imperial.....state**—the king appears to speak as if the kingdom of Denmark became a jointure of the queen on the death of her former husband ; but perhaps he merely means that her rights of sovereignty were equal with his own. **Jointress**—the possessor of a jointure, short for, jointuress.

10. **A defeated joy**—a joy robbed of its completeness.

11. **With an suspicious.....eye**—with one eye bright with joy, with from the tears were falling.

12. **With mirth.....marriage**—if the king is to be taken as speaking literally, this must mean qualifying the sorrow felt at his brother's funeral with an admixture of joy at the prospect of marrying his widow, and equally qualifying the mirth at that wedding by sad remembrance of his brother's death. **Dirge**—a funeral lament : Moberly remarks. "The studied antitheses repeated over and over in this speech give it a very artificial appearance. The king's politic and parliamentary reasons for marrying the queen remind us of the similar motives which an eminent writer supposes to have influenced Henry VIII. in his prompt re-marriages."

13. **In equal.....dole**—equally balancing joy and grief, not giving to either advantage over the other. **Dole**—sorrow, lamentation.

14. **To wife**—for wife, as wife.

14, 6. **Nor have we.....along**—nor have I in coming to a decision in the matter acted without consulting you who in a matter personal to myself, were likely to show more dispassionate judgement, for I may say that from first to last you have given your fullest adherence to my action.

16. **For all, our thanks**—for everything you have done you have my gratitude.

18. **Holding.....worth**—having but a contemptuous idea of my capacity.

19. **By**—in consequence of.

20. **State**—kingdom. **Out of frame**—dislocated, shaken out of its proper form.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

21. **Colleagued.....advantage**—having for his only confederate this advantage which he fondly dreams he will derive from the unsettled state of our kingdom.

22-3. **He hath.....lands**—has persistently pestered me with messages the purport of which was that I should surrender.

24. **With.....law**—in full accordance with the legal agreement entered into by the two parties.

25. **So much for him**—of him and his acts I need say no more.

26. **This time of meeting**—this occasion for which we have called you together.

27. **Here**—the paper he holds in his hand.

29. **Scarcely hears**—has hardly any knowledge of.

30, 1. **To supress.....here in**—calling upon him to put a stop to his nephew's further proceeding in this matter.

32. **Lists**—literally catalogues, hence numbers. **Proportions**—quotas, contingents.

33. **Out of his subject**—from among his subjects.

35. **For bearers**—as bearers.

36-8. **Giving.....allow**—allowing you no further authority to treat with the king than the limits of these conditions, here in expressly state, permit.

32. **Let your.....duty**—let the haste you make in discharging your mission call for our approval of your duteous behaviour.

41. **Nothing**—in no way.

42. **What's.....you** ?—what have you to tell us about yourself ?

43. **You told.....sult**—you lately spoke to us about some request you had to prefer.

44. **Speak of reason**—mention any reasonable request.

45. **Lose your voice**—waste your words, speak in vain.

45-6. **What wouldst.....asking** ?—you cannot possibly make any request of us which we would not grant of our own free will, if we only knew what its nature was.

47-9. **The head.....father**—the head and heart, the hand and mouth, do not work together in more complete sympathy than do your father and myself.

51. **Your leave and favour**—your gracious permission.

53. **To show coronation**—to show myself a loyal subject by attending your coronation.

54. **Done**—being performed.

56. **And bow pardon**—and submit themselves to your gracious permission : asking as it were, to be excused for preferring France to the king's court.

58. **Wrung.....leave**—extorted from me a permission reluctantly granted.

59. **By laboursome petition**—by strenuous and persistent begging.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

60. **Upon his will.....consent**—with the utmost reluctances I assented to the determination he had so strongly formed ; there is an allusion to putting a seal to a will, testament, in order to give it validity, and a play upon the two meanings of will.

61. **Take .... hour**—choose the time that may best suit you for your departure. **Time be thine**—consider yourself at liberty to remain away as long as you may think fit.

63. **And thy .....will** !—and may that time be spent by you to the best purpose and in the way most agreeable to you.

64. **Cousin**—used in Shakespeare's time of almost any relationship not in the first degree. **Son**—step-son, the king having married his mother.

65. **A little.....kind**—the explanation of this line depends in the first place upon whether the words refer to himself or to the king, and, secondly upon whether. **Kind**—means 'kindly', 'well disposed', or 'of the same nature'. Malone, taking the former view, explains, "I am a little more than thy kinsman (for I am thy step-son), and am somewhat less than kind to thee (for I hate thee, as being the person who has incestuously married my mother)". Grant white, following Steevens, and taking the latter view, explains, "In marrying my mother, you have made yourself something more than my kinsman, and, at the same time, have shown yourself unworthly of our race, our kind".

66. **That the clouds.....you**—that you are still in such a gloomy mood.

67. **Too much I' the sun**—probably best explained by reference to the old proverb, quoted by Johnson, "Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun, "*i. e.* passing from a good state into one less favourable. Some commentators have supposed a pun on 'sun' and 'son' with an allusion to the king's words in 1.64, and with the meaning that Hamlet had too much of the son and successor about him without possession of his rights.

68. **Nighted colour**—dark frame of mind.

69. **Like a friend**—in a friendly way, as the eye of a friend would look. **Denmark**—*i. e.* the king.

70, 1. **Do not..... dust**—do not for all time go about with your eyes cast upon the ground as if you were looking for your father laid in the earth.

72. **'Tis common**—the occurrence of death is something that all equally share. **All that lives**—everything that has life.

73. **Nature**—this temporary existence in the natural world.

75. **Why seems... . thee** ?—why do you behave as though it were something special to you ?

78. **Nor customary.....black**—nor the usual sombre dress of mourners. **Solemn**—literally yearly, occurring annually like a religious rite.

79. **Nor windy.....breath**—nor the forced sighs of insincere grief. **Windy**—used in the contemptous sense of that which has nothing real in it.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

80. **The fruitful.....eye**—the tears always ready to fall so copiously.

82. **Modes**—methods of displaying grief externally. **Shapes**—external semblances.

85. **Passeth show**—goes beyond, is incapable of being represented by any outword demonstration.

86. **Trappings**—ornamental appendages.

88. **To give**—we should now say 'to play'.

89. **You must know**—you must bear in mind.

90. **That father.....bound**—that father who was lost by your father, lost his father : and the survivor in each case was bound, etc.

91. **Obsequious sorrow**—sorrow usual to show at the funeral of some one dear.

93. **Condolement**—sorrow for the dead ; nowadays we use the verb 'condole' only in the sense of expressing sympathy in sorrow, but in Elizabethan English it is often used as mourn.

94. **Impious**—in not showing resignation to the divine will.

95. **Incorrect to heaven**—which refuses to bow to the correction chastisement of heaven, as shown in the bereavement.

96. **Unfortified**—not fortified by the consolations of religion. **Impatient**—rebellious against the sufferings which it should bear with due submission.

97. **Simple**—foolish, ignorant. **Unschool'd**—that has not learnt the lessons which a wise man would lay to heart.

98. **What**—that which. **Must be**—must happen.

99. **An any.....sense**—as anything the most palpable to sense.

100. **Peevish**—childishly querulous ; fretful.

101. **Take it to heart**—cherish it as a wrong done to us. **To heaven**—towards, against, heaven.

102. **Nature**—that organization to which we belong, are a part of.

103. **To reason most absurd**—showing an utter deafness to the voice of reason.

104. **Still**—ever, constantly.

105. **Still he**—up to the time of him.

106. **Throw to earth**—complete cast from you.

107. **Unprevailing**—unavailing.

108, 9. **For let.....throne**—for I call all men to witness my declaration that I regard you as next in succession to the throne, Succession to the throne of Denmark seems to have been elective, though, as appears from the last scene of the play the recommendation of the previous occupant went for something in the election, and here the king is in effect pronouncing such recommendation beforehand.

110. **With no.....love**—with a love as full of generous feeling.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

111. **Dearest**—fondly loving and beloved.

112. **To school**—not necessarily in the sense in which we should now use the phrase, Wittenberg being a university. Of course, the mention of Wittenberg is an anarchronism, the university not having been founded till A. D. 1502.

114. **Retrograde**—opposed to : literally going back from ; an astrological term. Tschischwitz says that when planets were retrograde, going away from the earth's orbit, they were, under, certain circumstances, supposed to be hostile to human plants.

115. **Bend you**—incline your mind.

116. **In the cheer.....eye**—cheered and comforted by our gracious looks.

117. **Chiefest**—highest in rank and importance. **Cousin**—in the vocative case.

118. **Lose**—throw them away.

120. **I shall.....best**—I promise that I will to the best of my ability.

121. **Why, 'tis.....reply**—well, you could not have answered us in more affectionate and gracious terms.

122. **As ourself**—*i. e.* enjoying the same privileges and honours.

123. **Accord**—promise in harmony with our wishes.

124. **Sits.....heart**—nestles close to my heart, and smiles upon it ; *i.* e. is very dear to my heart, and cheers it by its presence. There is the twofold idea of an object being hugged to the heart, and of that object smiling upon the heart that thus gives it welcome. **I grace whereof**—and inorder to mark my gratitude by doing honour to your concession. **Grace**—honour, probably here used with a reference also to the saying of grace after meals for blessings bestowed.

125. **Jocund health**—joyous toasts to the health of some person. **Denmark**—I, 'the king of Denmark.

126. **But the great.....tell**—shall be drunk without the cannon announcing it to, etc.

127. **Rouse**—a drinking bout. **Bruit again**—reecho with loud report. **Bruit**—a great noise.

128. **Re speaking earthly thunder**—the skies echoing the reports of the cannon as with heavenly thunder.

129. **This.....flesh**—Moberly remarks, "The base affinities of our nature are always present to Hamlet's mind. Here he thinks of the body as hiding from us the freshness, life, and nobleness of God's creation".

130. **Resolve**—dissolve ; but usually in this sense with the idea of dissolving back into the original constituents.

132. **His cannon' gainst self-slaughter**—his ordinance forbidding suicide ; an ordinance not laid down in Scripture except in the general one against murder. **Canon**—a straight rod, a rule in the sense of a carpenter's rule, hence a rule, a standard of right.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

133. **Stale**—vapid. **Flat**—tasteless, as liquor becomes after standing uncovered for some time.

134. **Uses**—manners, ways, doings.

135-6. **tis an.....seed**—the world seems to me as a garden in which no care is taken to bring up the weeds, and in which the plants are left to run to seed (and so become worthless) instead of having their exuberant growth checked by pruning.

136. **Things.....nature**—things which for want of proper attention have become rank and gross in nature.

137. **That it.....this** !—to think that matters should have come to such a scandalous pitch ! what a horrible idea !

138. **But**—only.

139. **To this**—when compared to the present king.

140. **Hyperion to a satyr**—what the god of day is to a creature half goat, half man. The penultimate in. **Hyperion**—is long in Greek, but English poets from Spenser to moder times have disregarded this fact.

143. **Must I remember** ?—can I not put such thoughts out of my head ? must they ever be present there ? **Hang on him**—cling to him in fond embrace.

144-5. **As if.....on**—as if her loving desire had been made more eager by its mere satisfaction : been strengthened by the food of love it had enjoyed.

146. **Let me.....no't**—oh, that I could forget it ! **Frailty... ...woman**—if we wished to give frailty a descriptive name, no better one could be chosen than 'woman'.

147. **A little month**—a short month ; scarcely a month.

148. **Follow'd**—to the grave.

149. **Niobe**—daughter of Tantalus, and wife of Amphion. Proud of the number of her children, she boasted her superiority over Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis, who, indignant at the insult, slew all her children, she herself, according, to one tradition being changed by Zeus at her own request into a stone which during the summer always shed tears. **All tears**—a very impersonation of grief.

150. **That wants.....reason**—that lacks the power of reasoning, the reasoning faculty.

152. **But no more.....father**—but, though so closely skin in blood, no more akin in disposition.

154. **Ere yet.....tears**—ever before the self tears which, with such intention in her mind, were a me profanation of sorrow etc.

155. **Had left.....eyes**—had ceased to flush her eyes with "eye offending brine."

156. **To post**—to hurry at full speed ; from post, a runner, messenger.

157. **With such dexterity**—so quickly and cleverly. There seems to be here the idea of that combined nimbleness and ingenuity which is essential to success in tricks performed by sleight of hand ;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

not only did she swiftly transfer her affections from one brother to the other, but she showed in doing so a cunning regard for her own interests. **Incestous**—originally meaning nothing more than unchaste, but used specially of alliances within the forbidden degrees of relationship.

158. **Nor it cannot**—the emphatic double negative, frequent in Shakespeare.

160. **Hail**—literally health, a common salutation.

161. **Or do.....myself** ?—or am I making some mistake in fancying you to be Horatio ?

162. **Poor**—humble.

163. **I'll change you**—probably exchange that name with you, calling you friend and expecting you to call me so in return, rather than, as Johnson explains, "I'll be your servant, and you shall be my friend".

164. **What.....wittenberg** ?—what are you doing here away from wittenberg (where you ought to be) ?

168. **But what.....wittenberg**—but tell me truly what has brought you all the way from Wittenberg.

169. **A truant disposition**—an idle, roving nature ; rascally, roguish.

170. **Hear.....so**—stand by and hear your enemy say so without defending you against his charge.

172-3. **To make.....yourself**—as to make it believe your own report when it is one defaming yourself.

175. **We'll teach.....depart**—if we cannot do anything else, we will at all events teach.

179. **Hard upon**—closely after.

180. **Thrift, thrift**—pretending to excuse the unseemly haste of the marriage, Hamlet says that was but economy, nothing else. **The funeral baked meats**—the dishes cooked for the funeral ceremony; the custom of entertaining the relations and friends of deceased persons after the funeral survived to quite recent times. Cp. The Old Law, iv. 1·35-7, "Besides, there will be charges saved too ; the same rosemary that serves for the funeral will serve for the wedding".

181. **Did coldly.....tables**—served, when cold, for the wedding feast ; with a play upon coldly.

182. **Would I.....heaven**—I would rather have met my worst enemy in heaven (instead of his being in hell where I should wish him to be). **Dearest foe**—"dear is used of whatever touches us nearly either in love or hate, joy or sorrow".

183. **Or ever**—before ever.

186. **Goodly**—fine-looking.

187-8. **He was.....again**—he was a man whose equal, looking at him in all his characteristics, I shall never see again. **Take him**—if one regards him. **For all in all**—for everything about him in every respect.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

190. **Saw ? Who** ?—both words emphatic ; what do you mean by saying you saw him ? and whom do you mean by him ?

192-3. **Season**.....**ear**—let your wonder be mixed with, qualified by attention for a time. **Admiration**—always used by Shakespeare either as 'wonder' simply or as wonder mingled with veneration and so more in accordance with its original sense. Attentative. **Deliver**—relate.

194. **Upon**.....**gentlemen**—resting upon the evidence of these gentlemen which will bear out what I have to say.

197. **On their watch**—while keeping their watch.

198. **In the dead**.....**the night**—in the silent vacancy or midnight. **Vast**—"applied to the darkness of midnight in which the prospect is not bounded in by distinct objects" (Schmidt).

200. **Armed at point exactly**—in armour complete to the smallest particular. **Cap-a pe**—from head to foot.

202. **Goes**.....**them**—passes in front of them in slow and stately manner.

204. **Within**.....**length**—less than the length of his truncheon away from them. **Truncheon**—short staff, a symbol of kingly (or other) office.

204, 5. **Distill'd**.....**fear**—dissolved almost into a jelly by the action of fear upom them ; *i. e.* with beads of sweat falling from their foreheads, like jelly melting ; unless there is a reference to the tremulous nature of jelly, and its being allowed to drip through a flannel bag when being made.

207. **Dreadful**—terror-stricken. **Impart they did**—"this inversion gives formality and solemnity to the speaker's words".

Where.....**comes**—and to that spot (where we were keeping watch) the apparition comes at the very time of night and in the very sharp described by them, every particular of their narrative being substantiated.

212. **These hands**.....**like**—these two hands of mine (holding them up) being not more like each other than was the figure like your father.

214. **Did you it** ?—you surely did not allow it to pass without questioning it ?

216. 7, **And did**.....**speak**—and prepared to speak, as shown by the moving of its lips, made as though it would speak. **Like**..... .....**speak**—*i. e.* just as it would do if it were about to speak.

218. **Even then**—at that very instant.

219. **Shrunk**—*i. e.* into thin air.

221. **As I do live**—as surely as I live.

222. **Writ**.....**duty**—laid down among the items of our duty as though they had a scroll with the different particulars enumerated.

224. **Indeed**.....**me**—assuredly this troubles me.

226. **Arm'd say you** ?—said with reference to the ghost.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

228. **Baever**—"the lower portion of the face-guard of a helmet when worn with a visor ; but occasionally serving the purposes of both.

230. **A countenance .....anger**—the expression of his features was that of sorrow rather than anger.

233. **Constantly**—persistently, without taking them off our faces.

234. **Amazed**—bewildered.

238. **Grizzled**—of greyish colour.

240. **A sable silver'd**—a black beard with threads of silver in it.

242. **Assume.....person**—present itself in the form of my father. **Assume**—take upon it, but without any idea of its doing so without right.

243, 4. **Though hell.....peace**—though hell, by opening at my feet, should endeavour to deter me from speaking.

246. **Let it.....still**—let it be a thing about which you find it still possible to keep silence. **Tenable**—not elsewhere used by Shakespeare.

247. **Hap**—happen.

248. **Give it.....tongue**—take it well into your minds, let it impress itself firmly upon your minds, but do not utter a word about it.

251. **Our duty to your honour**—we assure your honour (used as a title) of our loyal obedience.

252. **Your loves**—i. e. it is your affection, not your duty, that I desire, just as it is affection that I feel towards you.

253. **In arms** !—not merely, or so much, that he ghost appears clad in armour, but than it has risen to avenge some injury.

All is not well—some wrong has evidently been perpetrated. Hitherto Hamlet, though vigorously condemning his mother's haste in re-marrying, especially as her choice is a so unworthy one, and pouring contempt upon his uncle, has had no suspicion of foul play.

254. **Doubt**—suspect.

255. **Sit still**—strive to be composed.

255,6. **Foul deeds.....eyes**—foul deeds will reveal themselves to men's eyes however thoroughly they may appear to be hidden ; cp. Macb iii. 4. 123-6, "Stones have been known to move and trees to speak ; Augurs and understood relations have by magotpies and choughs and rooks brought forth The secret'st man of blood".

ACT I

SCENE III

Summary of the Scene

This scene reveals Hamlet's relations with Ophelia. This relationship comes out through the warning given her by her brother Laertes and her father Polonius. Laertes is ready to go back to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Paris and at the time of farewell he cautions her against the advances of Hamlet towards her. Laertes, who it seems has a sober and sceptical view of life, distrusts Hamlet's advances to his sister as mere youthful sports of a Prince. He explains to her that Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark so that "his will is not his own." While this intimacy may not harm Hamlet at all, this may endanger or tarnish her reputation for ever. He cautions her not "to un-mask her beauty to the moon." Ophelia gently submits herself to her brothers' warning and assures her to keep his lessons "as watchman to my heart."

The conversation between the brother and sister is interrupted by their father Polonius. Pononius also gives the same caution to Ophelia. He asks her "not to believe his 'vows', for they may be "mere implorators of unholy suits". He orders her to cut her meetings with Hamlet and gradually withdraw herself completely from him. Ophelia, like a docile lamb, simply replies : "I shall obey, my Lord."

Critical Comments :

This scene introduces Ophelia and reveals her relations with Hamlet. Ophelia inspresses us a very pretty young maiden because a Prince dotes on her. She is innocent like a dove and gentle like a lamb. This is why Laertes and Polonius think it necessary to caution her against any hasty steps in love. "She accepts her brother's warning submissively and with no sign that she is hurt. From the first she seems curiously passive and restrained : and she has a docility that only women of dangerously over-sensitive emotions show," (Schucking).

This scene also gives a picture of the typical Elizabethan aristocratic family. The family in those days was regarded to a great extent as a school for morals, and even children were expected to be the mouth-pieces of ethical maxims. There is, therefore, nothing strange in the conversation between Ophelia, Laertes and Polonius. Polonius not only warns Ophelia but also gives his farewell blessings to Laertes in the form of a number of moral maxims. These maxims are in keeping with the worldly setting of the play, and reflect the practical wisdom of aristocratic society in the Elizabethan age. Many of his maxims have come down to us as proverbs and epigrams, such as the following :

"Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice."
"Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment."
"The apparel oft proclaims the man."
"Neither a borrower nor a lender be."

This scene also serves as a scene of dramatic relief. Verity says that "one of the most striking illustrations of Shakespeare's observance of the principle of dramatic relief in the use of scenes that stand out from the main scheme of design and colour, and thereby serve to set it off.". This homely scene of family conversation, blessings and farewell, is in sharp contrast with the ghost scenes that precede and follow it. Scenes IV and V that follow it are scenes

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of fierce horror and supernatural visitations. The horror of these scenes is intensified, on the principle of contrast, by the gentle and homely atmosphere of this scene.

Lastly, this scene reveals Shakespeare's mastery in the presentation, half-ironical and half-tragic, of the pathos of daily life. For when, as here, the tender growth of first love is callously trampled upon by those grown materialistic advancing years, complacent in their wide experience of life and cynical worldly knowledge, then there is underlying tragedy, whether the victim is fully conscious of it or not. On the other hand, the petty and undignified attitude of Polonius, particularly when his vanity is touched, has an extremely comic side. It is not without reason that Hamlet declares later on that the old man plays the fool in his own house. Of this scene Coleridge remarks, "This scene must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence of our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of a stop".

Notes

1. **Necessaries**—luggage or baggage. **Bark'd**—put on board the vessel.

2. **As the.....benefit**—according as (whenever) from time to time the winds serve, are in a quarter favourable to the sailing of a vessel.

3. **And convoy is assistant**—and the means of conveying a letter is at hand ; *i. e.* when there is both a favourable wind and a vessel sailing in that direction. **Do not sleep**—do not be too lazy to write.

5. **For Hamlet.....favour**—as for Hamlet and the admiration which he carelessly offers you.

6. **Hold it a fashion**—regard it as nothing more than a passing fancy, a thing sure to change as quickly as fashion in dress. **A toy in blood**—a mere caprice of impulse.

7. **A violet.....nature**—as a violet appearing in the early spring (*i. e.* before its proper season) ; **Primy**—belonging to the prime, early days of the year.

8. **Forward, not permanent**—precocious, but enduring for a short season only.

9. **The perfume.....minute**—the perfume which a minute affords and which with the minute passes away ; merely an amplification of the words.

10. **No more but so** ?—Nothing more than that ?

11-4. **For nature.....withal**—for a man's nature, when in a state of growth, does not show its expansion merely in physical strength and size ; but as the body fills out, the mind and soul also expand in the service they inwardly perform, extending their operations to a much wider sphere. In other words, Hamlet as yet is a mere youth, and the scope of his thoughts being but narrow, he

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Collection Bantalab Jammu

finds pleasure in making love to you ; but, as he grows older, larger interests will occupy his mind, and he will forget all about you. **Thews**—sinews, strength.

14. **Perhaps.....now**—Laertes does not mean to charge Hamlet with insincerity ; his love may be real enough, he says, but it will quickly change.

15-7. **And now.....will**—and at present no evil thought or crafty design stains the essential goodness of his intentions towards you.

16-7. **But you.....own**—but what you have to fear is that, his position in the state being taken into consideration, he is not at liverty to follow his own inclinations.

18. **For he.....birth**—for he must submit himself to the conditions of his birth.

19-20. **He may not—himself**—it is not possible for him, like persons of no consequence, to cut out a path for himself in whatever direction it pleases him. **On his choice**—on the choice he makes of a wife.

22-4. **And therefore.....head**—and therefore must that choice be restricted in accordance with the approval and consent of the body politic, whose head he is.

25-7. **It fits.....deed**—it is incumbent upon you, if you are wise, to put faith in his professions of love only so far as he, action as he must act in the particular conditions of his rank, is able to give effect to his promises.

27-8. **Which is.....withal**—and this freedom of action extends no furher than it is in accordance with the general wish of the people.

30. **Credent**—readily believing, credulous. **List his songs**—listen to his love songs.

31. **Lose your heart**—yield up your love. **Chaste treasure**—treasure consisting in chastity.

32. **Unmaster'd**—which gets the better of him ; at a time when he has no control over his passions.

33. **It**—the danger of accepting and returning his love.

34. **And keep.....affection**—do not allow yourself to go so far in meeting his wishes as your love for him would prompt you to do.

35. **Out of.....desire**—out of the dangerous aim of passion.

36-7. **The chariest.....moon**—even that maiden who is most chary of allowing her beauty to be gazed upon, and who refuses to let it be gazed upon except by the chaste moon, is in doing so quite as prodigal as she ought to be.

38. **Virtue.....strokes**—not even the very impersonation of virtue is exempt from the shafts of calumny.

39-42. **The canker.....imminent**—the firstlings of the spring even before their buds have opened, are blighted by the cankerworm :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and youth while in its first bloom, a flower just washed by the dew of early morning, is most in danger of being withered by pernicious blasts ; in plain language, Ophelia's youth and innocence render her most liable to danger. **The canker**—a small worm that eats into and destroys the flower. **Galls**—literally rubs into a sore. **The infants of the spring-Buttons**—buds, the original sense of the word. **Contagious**—pestilential, pernicious, used by Shakespeare of fogs, clouds, darkness, breath, etc.

43. **Best safety lies in fear**—cp. Mach. iii. 5-32, "And you all know, security (*i. e.* a sense of safety) is mortals' chiefest enemy".

44. **Youth.....near**—"in the absence of any tempter, youth rebels against itself. *i. e.* the passions of youth revolt from the power of self-restraint ; there is a traitor in the camp.

45-6. **I shall.....heart**—I shall keep the purport of this lesson as a safeguard to my heart ; I shall lay your lesson to my heart and trust it to act as a watch against all inclination to weakness. **Good, my brother**—coleridge remarks, "You will observe in Ophelia's short and general answer to the long speech of Laertes the natural carelessness of innocence, which cannot thinks such a code of cautions and prudences necessary to its own preservation".

47. **Ungracious**—who have none of that holiness which they preach to others.

49-51. **Whiles.....rede**—while, like a debauchee, bloated with indulgence and heedless of all consequence, you tread the flower-strewn path of wanton folly, and have no thought of following the advice you offer to others.

For Primrose path—Macb. ii. 3-17, "I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.

51. **Fear me not**—do not be anxious on my account.

53. **A double.....grace**—a double blessing carries with it a double store of happiness ; Polonius has already said good-bye (God be with you) once.

54. **Occasion.....leave**—accident is propitious in allowing us a second farewell.

55. **For shame** !—*i. e.* you ought to be ashamed of yourself for having delayed so long.

56. **Sits.....sail**—is already filling your sails.

57. **And you.....for**—and your companions are waiting for you. With thee', go with you !

59. **Character**—inscribe indeliby.

60. **Nor any.....act**—nor translate into action any ill-regulated thought. **His act**—the act which would be the consequence of the thought.

61. **Be thou.....vulgar**—show yourself ready to be upon intimate terms with your acquaintance, but do not make yourself too common.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

62-3. **Those friends.....steel**—bind to your very soul those friends you have, and whose adoption by you has been put to the proof.

64-5. **But do not.....comrade**—but do not make yourself incapable of judging between the value of one man and another by accepting the offer of friendship made by anyone with whom you are thrown, however raw and inexperienced in the world he may be. The figure is that of depriving the sense of touch of that delicates sensitiveness which enables a man to distinguish with nicety between different surfaces.

65-7. **Beware.....thee**—be cautions about engaging in a quarrel, but when once engaged in it, carry matters in such a way that your enemy may in future hesitate about provoking you.

68. **Give.....voice**—be ready to listen to what each man has to say, but be chary of giving your own views.

69. **Take.....judgement**—here each man's opinion, but forbear to deliver your own decision as to its merits. **Censure**—opinion, the wider and original meaning of the word ; the present limited sense of unfavourable opinion being due to the fact that men are more ready to blame than to praise.

70. **But not.....gaudy**—but do not let its costliness be shown by its being fanciful, extravagant ; let it be rich locking, but not showy.

71. **Costly.....buy**—let your dress be as costly as your means will allow.

72. **For the apparel.....man**—for his dress is often an indication of wearer's character.

76. **For loan.....friend**—for by lending to a friend you often lose both the money itself and the friendship of him to whom you lent it, sc. owing to the disputes arising from his not repaying his debt.

77. **Dulls.....husbandry**—takes the fine edge off economy : makes a man less thirfty than he would be if he knew that nobody would lend him money.

79. **As the night**—as surely as the night follows.

81. **Season**—give durability ; Polonius hopes that his blessing accompanying his advice will make it more lasting than it would otherwise be, just as wood is seasoned by whether.

83. **The time invites you**—*i. e.* it is high time that you should.

Tend—wait for, are expecting, you.

86. **And you.....it**—and unless you say that it is no longer necessary for me to keep it safely, it shall ever remain there.

89. **So please you**—if it so please you, a deprecatory form of courtesy.

90. **Marry**—a corruption of the name Mary, *i. e.* the Mother of Christ, in order to avoid the statute against profane swearing.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh against profane swearing. MoE-2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Well be thought—that is fortunately thought of : I am glad you should have reminded me of the subject.

92. **Given.....you**—spent upon you in private some of the leisure at his disposal : the turn of the sentence seems to show that private comprises the character of the time *i. e.* time that Hamlet could call his own, time that was not needed for public purposes, and also the manner in which he spent that time, sc. privately with Ophelia.

93. **Have.....bounteous**—have been more ready to listen to him than you should have been.

94. **As so.....me**—for so I have been informed.

95. **And that.....caution**—and informed with the object of putting me upon my guard. **And that**—emphasizes the object with which he was told. **Must**—cannot help.

96-7. **You do not honour**—you have not such a clear conception as you ought to have of what becomes you as my daughter and as a modest maiden.

98. **What is between you** ?—what understanding to agreement exists between you ? **Give.....truth**—tell me without keeping any thing back.

99. **Tenders**—offers.

101 **Green**—raw, inexperienced, foolish.

102. **Unsifted.....circumstance**—one that has not been sifted, tried, by experience of such dangerous matters.

104. **What I should think**—what to believe.

106-7. **That you.....sterling**—for having taken as current coin these offers which are of no sterling value. **Sterling**—first applied to the English penny, said to be so called from the Easterlings or North Germans, who were the first moneyers in England.

107. **Tender.....dearly**—put a higher value upon yourself.

108. **To crack.....phrase**—to ride the phrase—to death.

109. **Running it thus**—carrying on the figure of a horse being ridden till, broken-winded, it comes to a stand-still. **Tender me a fool**—pretent me to the world as a fool, show me as a fool.

110-1. **He hath.....fashion**—he has made me urgent proposals of honourable love.

112. **Ay.....it**—you are quite right to use the word. **Fashion**—for his profeers of love are but a mere fashion, something that will change quickly enough. **Go to, go to**—nonsense, nonsense : a cummon phrase of contemptuous reproof, or, as sometimes, of exhortation.

113-4. **And hath.....heaven**—and has confirmed his vows by almost every possible appeal to heaven. **Countenance**—credit authority.

115. **Ay.....woodcocks**—yes (said scornfully), shares to catch fools. The woodcock, from its being easily snared, or from its being su pposed to have but little brain, was a frequent equivalent for a fool, si mpleton.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

116. **When the blood burns**—when passion is strong, when the heart is inflamed with passion.

117-20. **These blazes...fire**—these flashes of passion, which give forth more light than warmth, and of which both the light and the warmth die out even at the moment of their promise, while it is yet in the course of being made, you must not mistake for the fire which burns with steady and comforting warmth. **Promise**—seems to be used with an allusion to its literal meaning, that which is sent forth.

121. **Be somewhat.....presence**—show the reserve which becomes a maiden by allowing him fewer opportunities of meeting you. **Maiden**—from its position, seems to have this emphatic sense.

122-3. **Set your.....parley**—put a higher value upon yourself than to consider the entreaties you receive from him as a command, which you cannot disregard, to enter into negotiations. **Your**—used objectively, of which you are the object.

124-6. **Believe.....you**—so far, and so far only, let your belief in him go as to bear in mind that he is young, and therefore both eager and changeable, and that to him, as a man, a larger license in making love is allowable than to you in accepting love; do not be over-credulous in trusting him, but remember that his youth and his sex are both to be considered in estimating his profession of love. **In few**—to sum up shortly.

127-8. **For they.....show**—for they are go betweens that do not show themselves in their true colours. **Investments**—dress.

129. **Mere.....suits**—nothing but advocates to urge disgraceful proposals.

130-1. **Breathing.....beguile**—taking in the language of sanctimonious and hypocritical bawds so as the more effectually to deceive; this is for all, to sum up all I have to say.

133. **Have you.....leisure**—have you so misused any moment of your leisure.

134. **As to.....Hamlet**—'give words to, or hold talk with, the Lord Hamlet'.

135. **Look to't**—take care that you do as I laid you; it being used indefinitely. **Come your ways**—come along with me where you should go i, e. to your room. **Ways**—is not here the plural, but the old genitive used adverbially, on your way.

136. **Shall**—"When a person speaks of his own future actions as inevitable, he often regards them as inevitable only because fixed by himself."

ACT I

SCENE IV

Summary of the Scene :

This scene opens like Scene I. It is cold, and near midnight in the distance a noise of revelry is heard within the castle. Hamlet and Horatio join the sentinels on watch at the gates of the castle :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet eagerly awaits the appearance of the ghost as reported by Horatio. Hamlet courts unbearable moments of suspense waiting for the ghost.

Suddenly the ghost appears. It gives a violent shock to Hamlet's feelings. He cries out as if horror had stopped his heart from beating. Although Hamlet's situation in respect of the ghost is different from that of either Macbeth or Brutus, for he has brought no guilt upon himself, yet the spectre produces a violent emotional shock in him, because it is his dear father's ghost. He is shaken to the very core of his being. Hamlet, the sceptic unexpectedly gives vent to an adjuration that is like a cry for help or a prayer for protection : "Angels and ministers of grace defend us." So terrible is the shock that Hamlet, the sceptic seems to turn into a believer. But soon he regains his emotional stability. Therefore in spite of his excitement be addresses the ghost with a certain amount of objectivity :

What may this mean.
That thou, dead corse, again in complete sheel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous.

The ghost beckons Hamlet to follow him. Hamlet is driven towards the ghost with the filial devotion of a loving son. Horatio and Marcellus try to prevent him from following the ghost but Hamlet pays no heed to their apprehensions and warnings. He has a presentiment that he is in the presence of his fate. And when his companions, alarmed at the emotional stress under which he is labouring, make a well-meaning attempt to hold him back, he threatens them with violence, declaring with a levity born of horror, that he will "make a ghost of him that lets" him.

Critical Comments :

This is one of the most powerful supernatural scenes Shakespeare ever produced. Nothing could be more characteristic of the unprecedented delicacy with which Shakespeare delineates individual character than the way in which he here allows Hamlet to give full expression to this horror. Ghosts appear to other Shakespearean characters also. To Brutus, sitting alone by candle light, the murdered Caesar comes, Macbeth sees Banquo at the feast, shaking his bloody locks at him. The clear sighted Roman feels his blood run cold and his heir rise from his scalp, but none the less he at once boldly speaks to the apparition. Macbeth shrinks back, paralysed with fear, and stammers out the lying words that betray his weakness and moral cowardice. But the effect of this ghost's appearance on Hamlet is the worst, for the reason that he is emotionally attached to his father's ghostl. Shakespeare hits a psychological feat in presenting the emotiona character of Hamlet in the presence of the ghost.

Dwelling on this point Coleridge says : "The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakespeare't minutest knowledge of human nature. It is a well-established facs

CC-0 Agamitra. Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that, on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavour to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances."

Shakespeare follows his familiar principle of contrast in this scene also. The king's revel within the castle is designedly a contrast to the scene of watching on the battlements. From the scenic point of view the contrast may be made very effective, with the lights of the banqueting hall in the far background.

Notes

1. **Shrewdly**—bitterly : used of anything sharp or bitter, especially of temper or language.

2. **Eager**—sharp.

3. **Lacks of twelve**—is comewhat short of midnight.

4. **Held ...walk**—has been accustomed to walk.

Stage Direction—A flourish of trumpets, a sounding of trumpets in a triumphal manner.

8. **Doth wake to night**—sits up feasting : the feast of the dedication of a church (formerly kept by watching all night).

10. **Rhenish**—Rhine wine.

11. **Kettle drum**—a drum resembling a kettle in shape. **Bray**—like blare, used especially of trumpets, clarions, and such like wind-instruments.

12. **The triumph of his pledge**—the victorious deed of drinking a toast, pledging some one in a toast : Delius points out that the words are said in the bitterest irony.

14. **To my mind**—to my thinking : in my opinion.

15. **And.....born**—and therefore by my birth accustomed to the fashion.

16. **More honour'd.....observance**—which it is more honourable to neglect than to observe.

17. **Heavy-headed revel**—revelry that ends in a heavy head, a headache ; or perhaps only 'stupid,' 'doltish'. **East and West**—far and wide ; from one side of the world to the other.

18. **Makes.....nations**—causes us to be vilified and reproached by other nations.

19, 20. **And with addition**—brand us with the title of hogs.

Addition—in this sense is more commonly used by Shakespeare of an honourable title.

21. **Though..... height**—though performed with the loftiest chivalry and courage.

22. **The pith.....atribute**—the most essential and most valuable part of our reputation for courage, sc. by making out that courage is inspired by liquor. So, we speak of 'Dutch courage', meaning courage inspired by Holland's gin ; and so Lamartine in his description of the battle of Waterloo accounts for the furious charges of our cavalry by asserting that they had been drugged with brandy.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

23-4. **So, oft.....them**—in a similar manner it often happens in the case of particular men (here opposed to a whole nation) that in consequence of some natural blemish : **Vicious**—is nor here used in the more common modern sense of "addicted to vice'. but as faulty, defective. **Mole**—more commonly used of a physical mark.

25. **As**—Walker remark that the word is here used not in the sense of 'for instance', but in that of 'namely', to wit'. The particulars enumerated in this passage are (1) **In their birth** (2) by the O'ergrowth —etc., (3) by some habit. Wherein they are not guilty-for which defect they cannot be held answerable.

26. **Since.....origin**—since the nature of a man cannot choose from what source it will be derived. His its.

27-8. **By the.....reason**—owing to the fact of some particular temperament developing itself to excess, and so breaking down the stronghold of reason ; the figure is that of a plant which by being allowed to grow unchecked to an excessive size, breaks down by its weight the enclosures and barriers by which it ought to be hemmed in. Warburton refers to the different humours, the sanguine the melancholy, the phlegmatic, etc., by one or other of which each man was of old supposed to be governed.

29-30. **That too much..... .....manners**—which by its excessive admixture viciously affects the form of manners naturally pleasing. **Plausive**—worthy of applause.

31. **Carrying.....defect**—bearing about upon them the brand of some one defect.

32. **Being.....star**—which they owe either to nature or to fortune : in the one case the defect is spoken of as the dress which nature has forced upon them, in the other as some affliction due to the malignant influence of fortune's stars.

33-4. **The virtues.....undergo**—their virtues in all other respects, even though they are as pure as grace itself, as infinite as it is possible for the nature of man to support ; *in undergo* the idea is of a load of goodness such as frail human nature is. **Their virtues**—implying these virtuous men.

35-6. **Shall.....fault**—are certain in the general estimation of mankind to be looked upon as tainted with evil contracted from that particular fault. **Take**—used in the sense of contracting a disease.

40. **Be thou.....damn'd**—whether you be a good spirit or an evil one condemned to hell. **Spirit of health**—"a healed or saved spirit".

43. **Bring with thee**—whether you bring with you.

43. **Thou comest.....shape**—you appear in a form which so provokes interrogation : cp. Macb. i.3·43, "Live you or are you aught that man may question ?" addressed to the witches.

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

45. **King.....Dane**—Hamlet in his excitement heaps one title upon another, expressing his readiness to use any term of address which may be likely to elicit an answer.

46. **Burst in ignorance**—i. e., in the eager desire to have his ignorance dispelled.

48. **Canonized**—over which the service prescribed in the canon for the dead has been performed. **Hearsed in death**—at your death consigned to the tomb.

48. **Cerements**—grave clothes ; the shroud, a cloth dipped in melted wax in order to preserve it.

49. **Inurn'd**—entombed.

50. **Ponderous and marble**—ponderous because made of marble.

51. **May**—can possibly.

52. **In complete steel**—in panoply, armed from head to foot. **Complete**—accent on the former syllable. Steevens remarks that the Ghost is probably introduced in armour for rhe sake of greater solemnity ; though it was really the custom of the Danish kings to be buried in that manner.

53. **Revisit'st.....moon**—revisit the earth at this hour of night when the moon is struggling to appear from behind the clouds.

54-6. And we.....souls ? It is doubtful whether the construction here is 'making us (we where we should write us) to shake or 'that we should be made to shake' ; in either case the general sense is 'so that the mental organization of us who are the sport of nature should be convulsed with thoughts that our souls cannot grasp.

57. **Should**—ought.

59-60. **As if.....alone**—as if it had some knowledge which it wished to communicate to you in privacy.

61. **Waves you**—invites you by waying its hand. **Removed**—distant.

63. **Then**—*i. e.* as it evidently will not speak to me here.

64. **Should be**—can possibly be.

65. **I do not.....fee**—I do not value my life at the worth of a pin : **Set**—used in the language of gaming for 'stake' ; I would not stake my life as an equivalent to a pin. **Fee**—property ; payment.

66. **For**—as regards.

69. **What if.....flood**—suppose it should tempt you to the ocean.

71. **That becetles.....sea**—that hangs frowningly over its base base and dips down into the sea ; **Beetles**—"The idea was adopted from the M. E. bitelbrowed, beetle-browed, having projecting or sharp brows.

73. **Which might.....reason**—the sight of which might take away the controlling principle of your reason.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

75. **Toys of desperation**—desperate fancies "an allusion to what many persons feel when on lofty heights, a desire of throwing themselves down" (Hunter).

76. **Without more motive**—though it have no other inducement.

78. **Vaves me still**—still invites me, by waving its arms, to follow it.

81. **Be ruled**—suffer yourself to be controlled, over-persuaded, by us in this matter. **My fate cries**—my destiny callsupon me to act.

82-3. **And makes.....nerve**—Shakespeare seems always to have used. **Nerve**—for sinew, tendon, not for a fibre conveying sensation ; and from this passage to have supposed that nerve and artery were of the same texture, their outward appearance being very similar, and it not being known in this day that arteries convey the blood from the heart.

85. **I'll make.....me**—I'll send him who hinders me to join the ghost in the regions below.

87. **He waxes.....imagination**—his excited imagination is driving him into madness : to wax, to grow, increase, become.

89. **Have after**—let us follow him. **Issue**—conclusion, result.

90. **Rotten**—utterly unsound in a morbil state.

91. **It**—"that is, the issue". **Nay**—let us not leave it to heaven to set things, right, but act ourselves.

ACT I

SCENE V

Summary of the Scene

Hamlet goes with the ghost to a lonely place. The ghost now begins to speak. At first, the ghost, in order to touch the heart of his dear son, tells him that he burns in the "sulphurous and tormenting flames" of hell during the day and stalks the world during the night.

The ghost then discloses the secret of the crime of which he has been the victim, and Hamlet, who has always been troubled by suspicions, is struck to the heart and filled with a burning passion for revenge. The details that the ghost gives of his murder add fuel to the flames. What has specially seared the soul of the dead king is his bitter disillusionment about the Queen, who satiated with his true and tender love, has given her heart to a man for whom he has nothing but contempt. But although thoughts of revenge leave him no peace, and have forced him to return to earth, his hatred for his murderer does not exclude some tender feelings for the Queen : he would like mercy shown her, thereby displaying a certain tolerance in his attitude that is not otherwise apparent in him.

Giving the details of his murder the ghost of the old king says that it was his "custom always" to sleep in his orchard in the after-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

noon. One afternoon when he was thus sleeping in his orchard, Claudius stealthily stole upon him and poured the juice of a poisonous herb hebenon into his ears. The poison instantly worked upon his blood and caused his death. It was later given out that the old king had been stung by a poisonous serpent in the orchard. His treacherous brother then turned to his "most seeming-virtuous queen" and persuaded her to marry him. Raising his voice to a pitch in deep agony he ghost says.

"Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched."

The old king's heart writhes in agony to remember the incestuous marriage of his Queen with a dunce like Claudius ;

"Ay, that incestuous, the adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce ! won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !"

Finally, the ghost charges Hamlet to take revenge of his murder :

O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible !
If thou has nature in thee, bear it not ;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.

With these words, scenting the morning air, the ghost vanishes.

Hamlet is left meditating upon what the ghost has revealed. He has been struck dumb with grief, remorse and fury. He swears to himself to take full revenge upon his treacherous uncle. With the revelation of his mother's true character his faith in womankind is shaken.

In the mean time Horatio and Marcellus find him out and ask him what transpired between him and the ghost. Hamlet, instead of telling them what the ghost had revealed to him, asks them to swear solemnly never to talk about the visitation of the ghost to anyone. The ghost himself join in this swearing.

Critical Comments :—

In this scene the blood not only of Hamlet but also of the readers and spectators curdles in their veins. Schucking points out that Shakespeare's skill in handling the supernatural, an outstanding example of which is provided in this scene, shows more than anything else in his work his amazing psychological insight. Every syllable the ghost speaks betrays the unutterable torture of his soul. Not only are his words pregnant with the deepest feeling, but they are keyed all through to the same pitch of anguish. His character is barely sketched in, but his heartfelt words of love for the faithless

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Queen, and his request to Hamlet to spare her, show his great nobility. There is an underlying tenderness in the words with which he ends his sorrowful and fervent farewell : "Adieu, adieu ! Hamlet remember me !"

The scene further reveals Hamlet's character. In the preceding scene we had seen only his scepticism and boldness, here we witness his tenderness and emotional crisis. He does not let his friends, Horatio and Marcellus, share his agony. It is only a momentary glimpse into his tortured soul that they are allowed, as he gives a groan at the thought that he, of all men, should have been singled out to bear a burden too great for human strength. "There is no doubt that these final words of his sum up the essence of the whole tragedy. Now, for the first time, we begin to know Hamlet, and to form some idea of the difficulties that beset him. Another would have told friends he could trust everything and discussed with them a plan of revenge ; but Hamlet, in his inner life a complete solitary, a melancholic, a thinker, already at odds with himself, falls back on the most extraordinary expedient to achieve his aim. In spite of his resolve to carry out his task he is, as Goethe has said, "unequal to the deed." (Schucking)

Notes

Predman Krishen Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Edu. Engl. Hist.) B.Ed
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGAR-190002
KASHMIR

2. **My hour**—the time at which I must return to the lower regions.

6. **Bound**—Delius points out that Hamlet uses the word in the sense of ready to go, while the Ghost takes it as the past participle of the verb to bind.

8. **What** ?—sc. am I to revenge.

10. **To walk the night**—to spend the night in wandering about the earth.

11. **To fast in fires**—the commentators quote passages from Chaucer and other old writers in which among the punishments of hell are mentioned hunger, sickness, frost, etc. ; and if a spirit can be sensible to fire, as was the ordinary belief in regard to hell, there is no reason why it should not be sensible to hunger.

12. **My days of nature**—the days of my natural life ; or, possibly, the days in which I was subject to the passion of the natural man.

14. **But.....forbid**—except that I am forbidden ; if it were not that I am forbidden.

14. **My prison house**—sc. purgatory.

17. **Start from there spheres**—cp. M. N. D. iii. 153, "And certain stars shot madly from their spheres. To hear the seamaid's music'', has shown that in the Ptolemaic system, which shakespeare followed, round the earth, which was the centre of the system, were nine hollow spheres, consisting of the seven planets, the fixed stars or firmament, and the primum Mobile ; and that in or on each of the seven spheres was a planet fixed which was whirled by the sphere

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

right round the earth in twenty-four hours, the driving power being the Primum Mobile.

18. **Knotted and combined**—closely interwoven with each other.

19. **Particular**—separate, individual : And end.

20. **Fretful propentine**—easily irritated porcupine, which in its nervous excitement erects its bristles.

21, 2. **But this.....blood**—but this proclamation of the world beyond must not be made to those still in the flesh ; in **Eternal**—there is a contrast between the everlasting and spiritual world, and that temporary world in which flesh and blood, *i. e.* material life, exist.

27, 28. **Murder.....unnatural**—murder most foul, as it is even in circumstances where there is some palliation, such as long existing hatred, great provocation ; but in my case doubly foul, as being of so strange and unnatural a character, the number of a brother by a brother to whom nothing but brotherly love had ever been shown.

29. **Haste me to know't**—let me quickly know it quickly put me in the position of learning it.

31. **Sweep**—like a whirlwind. **Apt**—ready and fitted for the purpose.

32-4. **And duller.....this**—and more sluggish would you necessarily prove yourself than that heavy weed whose torpid growth clings to the banks of Lethe, if you were unwilling to bestir yourself in avenging my murder.

35. **Given out**—currently reported.

36-8. **So the whole.....abused**—the consequence of which is that every one in Denmark is grossly deceived by a forged story of the manner in which I met my death.

39. **Did sting.....life**—stung your father to death.

43. **Traitorous**—in being given for the purpose of winning away her love from her husband.

45. **Won to**—won over to, persuaded her to yield to.

47. **Falling-off**—desertion, act of faithlessness.

48-50. **Whose love.....marriage**—whose love was so worthy of the name that it never for a moment swerved from the vow made to her at the alter. **Even**—exactly, precisely.

50-2. **And to decline.....mine** !—and to think that should not only forsake me but forsake me for a miserable creature whose natural gifts could not for a moment compare with mine !

53-54. **But virtue.....heaven**—but just as virtue (*i. e.* really virtuous person) will never be led astray even though it be solicited by lewdness (*i. e.* a lewd person) in the garb of an angel.

55-7. **So lest.....garbage**—so lust (*i. e.* a lustful person), though linked in marriage with one as white of soul as a radiant angel, will ravenously glut itself with garbege even in a bed of heavenly purity.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

58. **Soft**—let me pause in these reflections and go on quickly with my story.

59. **Orchard**—garden ; now used only for a garden of fruit-trees.

60. **Upon.....stole**—your uncle crept softly upon me in my unguarded hour, at a time when I fancied myself safe.

62. **Hebenon**—probably ebony, though by some thought to be henbane. Both are spoken of as being poisonous.

63. **Porches**—entrances.

64. **Leperous**—producing upon the skin blotches like those in a leper : **Those effect**—which in its effect.

65. **Holds.....man**—is so hostile to.

66. **Quicksilver**—mercury. **Courses**—rushes.

67. **The natural.....body**—the passages and channels of the body, but here especially of the veins. **Gates**—gateways.

68-70. **And with.....blood**—and with a sudden energy thickens and curdles with the same effect as that of acids upon milk, when dropped into it, the blood which, while in a healthy state, is thin and fluid ; a posset, from which Shakespeare forms the verb, was a drink generally composed of hot milk curdled by being poured upon ale or sack, and was much in vogue at the time.

71-3. **And a most.....body**—and a most instantaneous eruption spread over my skin, covering it with a loathsome crust such as is seen upon lepers. **Bark'd**—formed as a bark or crust ; lazar, a person afflicted with sores such as those of Lazarus in the parable.

75. **Even in.....sin**—even when my sins were in full blossom.

77. **Unhousel'd**—without having received the sacrament administered to dying persons. **Disappointed**—unprepared ; not furnished, or appointed, with the religious consolations given to a dying man. **Unaneled**—without having received extreme unction, the ceremony in the Catholic Church of anointing a dying person with holy oil.

78. **No reckoning made**—without having made my reckoning with God by confession of my sins and repentance. **Sent to my account**—sent to answer for my sins before the judgment-seat of God.

79. **Imperfections**—shortcomings.

82. **Nature**—any feelings of natural affection for me and of natural regard for your mother's honour.

83. **Luxury**—lust ; as always in Shakespeare, the adjective and the adverb having the same idea.

84. **Howsoever.....act**—whatever measures you may take to punish the murderer.

85-6. **Taint not.....aught**—do not allow your mind to be in any way poisoned, or your soul to plot any injury, against your mother. **Leave her to heaven**—leave her to be punished by God.

87. **Thorns**—pricks of conscience.

89. **Matin**—morning.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

90. **His uneffectual fire**—his fire rendered ineffectual by the morning beams ; a proleptic sense.

93. **Shall I couple hell** ?—shall I invoke the powers of hell also ?

94. **Instant**—suddenly.

95. **Stiffly**—firmly, unshrinkingly.

96-7. **While memory.....globe**—so long as my brain remembers anything so long as memory is not deposed from her throne in the brain ; said as he points to his head. **Distracted**—wracked with agonizing thoughts.

98. **Table**—tablets.

99. **Fond**—foolish, frivolous.

100. **Says**—sayings, maxims. **Forms**—images formed in the mind. **Pressures**—impressions.

101. **That youth.....there**—that my youthful observation has set down there, *i.e.* in the tablets of his memory.

102. **Live**—have lasting record.

103. **Book and volume**—the redundancy gives the idea of completeness ; the one thing contained in the whole of the pages.

104. **Unmix'd.....matter**—unalloyed by anything of meaner importance.

107. **My tables**—let me get out my tablets. **Set it down**—make a memorandum of it.

110. **So, uncle, there you are**—so, uncle, now I have got my memorandum about you set down in black and white. **Now.....word**—now for the injunction given me by my father, sc. the words. **Adieu.....me.**

113. **Secure him**—protect him from injury.

116. **Come, bird, come**—"this is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them" (Hammer) : Hamlet taking up Horatio's call, as used in faclonry, carries on in his reply the language of that pursuit.

121. **Once**—so much as once ; ever.

122. **But you'll be secret** ? Hamlet pretends to pause, just as he is about to disclose what had happened, for a further assurance from Horatio and Marcellus that they will never reveal what he may tell them.

124. **But he's**—without his being ; who is not.

127. **Without.....all**—without further ceremony.

128. **I hold.....part**—it seems better that we should.

129. **You as.....you**—you to occupy yourselves in such a way as, etc.

130. **For every.....desire**—I say 'business and desire', for you, like other men, are sure to have some, etc.

131. **Such as it is**—whatever it may be.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

133. **Saint Patrick**—Shakespeare probably named the first saint that came into his head, and had no such subtle intention in choosing the patron saint of Ireland as some commentators suppose. He makes his characters swear by a variety of saints without much regard for their special functions or character.

136. **Whirling**—extravagant, inconsequent.

138. **And much offence too**—"Hamlet purposely misunderstands his friends's words in order to evade their inquiries. At first he pretends that his words have given offence, whereas the friends have merely found them vague ; and when they reply that there is no offence, he takes 'offence' in a wider sense as a 'crime', and refers it to the crime of his uncle that had just been divulged to him" (Delhius).

138. **That let me tell you**—so much it is well you should know ; said as though he were really confinding something to them.

139. **What is between us**—the secret between myself and the Ghost.

140. **O'ermaster't as you may**—I must recommend you to curb it as best you may.

141. **As you are.....soldiers**—on your faith as, etc.

146. **Not** I—i. e., I will not divulge it.

147. **Upon my sword**—it was customary to swear upon a sword, the hilt of which with the blade formed a cross.

149. **Indeed.....indeed**—strongly emphasizing his demand. Staunton prints indeed, in deed, and explains, "Not in words only, but in act, in form ; upon the cross of my sword swear yourselves.

150. **Truepenny**—according to Collier, "a mining term, signifying a particular indication in the soil of the direction in which ore is to be found" ; but the term was evidently used in a wider sense.

151. **Cellarage**—not exactly the same as 'cellar', but underground rooms suitable for cellers ; here of course meaning nothing more than underground.

153. **Never.....seen**—i. e. swear never, etc.

156. **Hic et ubique**—here and everywhere ; what, says Hamlet, are you here, there, and everywhere ?

158-9. **And lay.....heard**—i. e. and swear never, etc.

162. **Canst.....fast** ? can you burrow in the earth like a mole so fast that you have already reached the point directly under the spot to which we have moved ?

163. **A worthy pioneer**—well done ! you are an excellent pioneer.

164. **O day.....strange**—I call day and night to witness if this be not wondrous strange ; i. e. assuredly this is wondrous strange.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

165. **And therefore.....welcome**—if, as you say, it is strange, then treat it with the courteous welcome you would give to a stranger.

166-9. **There are.....philosophy**—to you this may seem very strange, but that is only because there are many more things in heaven and earth than the philosophy to which you are so addicted ever conceived.

169. **So help you mercy**—promise as you hope to find the mercy of God in your hour of need.

170. **How strange.....myself**—however strange and old I may be in my manner.

172. **An antic disposition**—a fantastic behaviour. Antic literally old, then old-fashioned, quaint.

174. **Encumber'd**—looked one with the other, like a man in the deep thought ; an attitude which Hamlet imitates as he speaks. To encumber is literally to load, hence to impede freedom of action. as would be the case with the arms folded. **This headshake**—this grave shake of the head assuming intense wisdom.

175. **Doubtful**—enigmatical.

176. **'Well, well, we know'**—sc. but do not care to tell. **We could.....would**—we could explain all this, if we thought proper to do so.

177. **If we list**—if we should so please. **There be.....might**—there are those could explain this, if they were allowed to do so. **Be**—used with an affectation of profound wisdom.

178. **Giving out**—declaration. **To note**—indicate by the outward signs of manner or speech.

179-81. **This not to do.....Swear**—swear, according as you hope that heaven's grace and mercy may help you in your time of used, not to do this ; the oath which Hamlet calls upon them to take would be 'I swear, so help me grace and mercy at my most need, not to do so', the help of grace and mercy being made by the taker of the oath conditional upon his keeping it.

184. **With all.....you**—with my best love I recommend myself to you ; by an avowal of my great love to you I solicit a return of equal love to myself ; polite form of farewell.

185. **Hamlet**—Clarke notes in this use of the third person the characteristic "of the philosophic man, reflective, thoughtful, given to moralize and speak in the abstract". In the mouth of Caesar and of Macbeth the frequent use is characteristic of arrogance.

186. **Friending**—friendship shown in action.

187. **God willing**—if it so please God. **Shall not lack**—shall not be wanting.

188. **And still.....lips**—and ever be silent of what you have seen ; the placing of the finger upon the lips being a sign that silence is to be kept.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

189. **Out of joint**—utterly disordered ; a metaphor from a bone which has slipped from its proper juncture with another bone, the same metaphore being apparently mixed up with that of setting clock.

189-90. **O cursed spite.....right**—"Hamlet does not lament that the disjointed time is to be set right by him, but that he whose duty it of necessity becomes to set the time right should have been born" '(Seymour)

191. **Nay.....together**—said as Horatio and Marcellus are on the point of leaving him, under the idea that he wished to be left alone.

ACT II

SCENE I

Summary of the Scene :—

In this scene Polonius once again appears on the stage. He is sending his servant Reynaldo to his son Laertes in Paris to deliver some letters and money to him. He instructs Reynaldo to act at the same time as a spy on Laertes. Polonius is anxious to know the real character and bearing of Laertes in Paris. He instructs him for this purpose in a technique of detection. Giving his instructions in detail he advises him to approach all possible friends and acquaintances of Laertes and cleverly broach the subject of the young man. Feigning distant acquaintance with Laertes or his father, Reynaldo is to insinuate that Laertes is an unbridled and gay young 'spark'. This trend of talk might lead his friends and acquaintances to comment on the character and manner of life of Laertes. This will be a correct appraisal of his character. In thus arraigning Laertes, Reynaldo should take care not to injure his reputation seriously. Besides this, he should also subject Laertes to his personal scrutiny and observation. Reynaldo then takes leaves of Polonius.

Immediately Ophelia appears before him. She is highly agitated and nervous. She tells her father that Hamlet visited her in a state of apparent mental derangement. She describes how he had appeared before her in disordered attire—such as was held to be the mark of those grown melancholy through love—and how, without uttering a word, he had made strange and alarming gestures apparently signifying love tortured by doubts, gazing fixedly at her the while, as though bent on reading her inmost thoughts. Then, still without speaking as if utterly numbed by despair, he had left her, without turning his eyes from her face until the last moment.

Polonius finds his daughter's tale in some ways not inopportune, for it gives him the key to a problem that has long caused much remark at the court, *viz.*, the inexplicable distraction and lack of mental balance to be seen in the Prince. He is now convinced that an unhappy love affair has temporarily affected Hamlet's

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

reason, and this belief is strengthened when Ophelia confirms his conjectures that the scene she has described had followed upon the breaking off of her relations with Hamlet, in compliance with her father's wishes. Polonius is not harsh by nature, and for a moment he shows himself honestly disturbed at not having believed in the sincerity of Hamlet's love and consequently at having wrought such havoc through the orders he has given his daughter. At the same time he sees at once that this will afford him a welcome opportunity of directing the king's attention towards himself. He, therefore, decides to report the whole affair to the King, for more harm is likely to ensue from concealing rather than revealing the state of Hamlet's feelings towards Ophelia.

Critical Comments :—

The relevance of this scene is not at first apparant. It appears to be a superfluous scene. But this is not quite so. Technically, it serves two main purposes : to supply some relief after the high tension of the previous scene, and to mark the passage of time. The feelings of the spectators have been stirred and strained to the breaking point in the preceding two ghost-scenes. The scene that follows this is a scene of clever machinations and intrigue. This small scene, therefore, gives a welcome breathing space to the spectators.

In the second place, it stands as a connecting link in point of time between the First Act and the Third Act. Schucking says : "This scene probably has the object of marking the passage of time. The sending of Reynaldo is intended to make it clear to the audience that some weeks have passed since the events previously witnessed. Later (Act III, Scene II, l. 135), definite data are forthcoming which shows this period to have been two months—Act III plays directly after Act II, and takes place four months after the old king's death, whilst the play itself begins two months after the event. During that long interval Hamlet, who had sworn to the ghost that he would revenge him straightway, has done nothing to carry out his oath."

Besides these technical points, the scene is also important because it throws much light on the character of Polonius. Granville suggests that the chief purpose of this scene is to bridge two apparently contradictory conceptions of Polonius, one as a respected diplomat and the other as a man "fuller of assurance than of wisdom." The scene throws into relief Polonius's love of tortuous ways and his overweening complacency and self-confidence. The comedy of character is sketched in with fine, acutely observed strokes. The old man, in putting on airs before an inferior, shows himself an inquisitive busy-body, as he makes an undignified back-door attempt to find out something about his son's conduct abroad. His intelligence is obviously limited and his principles lax. At all events the freedom he is ready to permit his son in sexual matters

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

is offensive. This shows what moral views were held in England at the time in aristocratic circles.

Lastly, the scene gives a definite clue regarding the real nature of Hamlet's madness. This scene follows Hamlet's resolution (Act I, Scene V) "to put an antic disposition on." Obviously, therefore, Hamlet's strange behaviour towards Ophelia, as reported in this scene, is a part of this "antic disposition." He counterfeits madness. It is true that on this occasion Hamlet acts in a way that seems to have something affectingly genuine, rather than assumed, about it. But we should not be missed by such an impression.

A note of deeper feeling can nearly always be distinguished in his words, even when he is deliberately talking as wildly as he can, and all the more so here, when something has happened that certainly touches him deeply. And even if the mark of one grown melancholy through love is, the ensueing action shows, clearly borrowed and put on for a special reason, yet the emotion shown in his sorrowful leave-taking of Ophelia is real enough. His behaviour reveals his bitter disappointment at the way in which this episode of his life has come to an end.

We learn a great deal here, too, about Ophelia. Again there is something curiously impersonal in her account of what has happened. Although she describes it as if she had seemed to divine the emotional tension that Hamlet's gestures betrayed, she remains passive and readly accepts the superficial explanations given by her father, whose orders she has always so dutifully and conscientiously carried out.

Notes

1. **Notes**—memorandums of advice ; cp, Cymb. i. 1. 171 "left these notes of what commands I should be subject to."

3. **You shall.....wisely**—the vain old man compliments himself in complimenting Reynaldo. **Shall**—you will certainly ; see Abb. S 315. **Marvellous**—used adverbially.

4-5. **To make.....behaviour**—to make inquiries as to how he has borne himself since he arrived in Paris ;

6. **Well said**—you are quite right ; a frequent expression of approval of deeds as well as words.

7. **Inquire me**—inquire on my account ;

8. **And how... .....keep**—and what their manner of life is, who they are, what their resources, income, and in what part of the city they live. **Keep, dwell**—a term still in use in the Universities.

9. **What company..... ...expense**—what company they keep, whom they entertain, and how much they spend in such hospitality ; inquiries by means of which it may be indirectly ascertained whether they are companious of Laertes.

10. **By this.....question**—by this roundabout way in which your questioning drives at its purpose ; cp. iii. i. 1, "drift of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

circumstance" ; and iii. 3. 83, "in our circumstance and course of thought."

11. **Know**—are acquainted with.

11-2. **Come you.....it**—approach more nearly to the subject than these demands regarding particulars will bring you.

13. **Take.....him**—pretend that you have some distant acquaintance with him.

14. **As thus**—saying for instance.

17. **But.....well**—adding 'but only slightly'.

19. **Addicted so and so**—with such and such propensities

19-20. **And there.....please**—and at this point, when you have got so far in your conversation, you may put upon him any imputations you think fit.

22-4. **But.....liberty**—but imputations of such wildness and extravagances as are commonly found to be the accompaniments of youth when not kept in too straitlaced control ; of young fellows when not tied, as we say, to their mother's apron-strings ;

25. **Fencing**—"I purpose it means piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and consequently quarrelling and brawling. "The conning of Fencers applied to quarrelling." Gosson, Schoole of Abuse" (Malone).

26. **You may go so far**—you may venture to bring these charges against him.

28. **Faith**—i.e. in faith, indeed. **As you charge**—if you qualify the accusation, as you may do by plausible excuses.

29. **Another scandal**—the further reproach.

30. **Open to**—liable to the charge of incontinency.

31. **Breathe**—utter, give voice to. **Quaintly**—with such ingenious reservations.

32. **The taints of liberty**—the faults which naturally arise from a young man being so completely his own master.

33. **Fiery**—high-spirited, impetuous.

34. **A savageness.....blood**—"a wildness such as is found in hot-blooded young men not yet Harwk stood unto the lure."

35. **Of general assault**—to the attack of which all are liable.

36. **Wherefore.....this** ? these suggestions to you.

37. **Would**—should like to. **Drift**—that at which I am driving ; my secret object.

38. **A fetch of warrant**—a well-approved design ; stratagem which will be justified by its success ; i. e. a cunning stratagem.

39. **You laying.....son**—you having imputed these trivial blemishes to my son.

40. **As twere.....working**—comparing him in that way to something that by being used has loss somewhat of its first gloss.

42. **Your.....onverse**—the person with whom you are talking. **Him you would sound**—he, I mean, to the bottom of whose thoughts

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

you wish to get ; the figure is that of taking soundings at sea ; on him put for he by attraction to whom understood.

43-45. **Having ever...consequence**—if he has ever seen the youth you speak of guilty of the sins already mentioned, he will be sure to endorse your remarks with, show his agreement by, some such words as these.

For consequence—that which follows, cp. Oth ii. 3. 65, "If consequence do but approve my dream."

46. **Or so**—or som.thing of the sort.

47-8. **According.....country**—using such phraseology as is customary in his country or such title as is generally applied to men. **Phrase**—going with country, addition with man : cp. W. T. iii. 2. 164. 5, "though I with death and with Reward did threaten and encourage him" ;

50. **Mass**—the sacrament of the Eucharist in the Catholic Church.

51. **Leave**—break off.

55. **He closes with you thus**—he agrees with you in these words.

57. **Or then, or then**—or at some time or other. **With such or such**—accompanied by such and such persons.

58. **O' ertook**—overpowered by drink.

59. **Falling out**—wrangling ; with the French tennis was particularly favourite game, and it was from that country that it and Fletcher speak of being in France and playing tennis as almost synonymous : "And after your whole year spent in tennis and broken speech", Loveless being about to visit France.

61. **Your bait of falsehood**—this falsehood which I suggested to you to use as a bait. **Takes.....truth**—"catches this fish, viz., with this melancholy bait. For this fool gudgeon, this opinion." **Bait of**—bait made of, consisting in.

62. **We.....reach**—we men of wisdom and far-reaching intellect.

63. **Windlasses**—a writer in the Edinburgh Review for July, 1869, shows that in Shakespeare's day windless "literally a winding, was used to express taking a circuitous course, fetching a compass, making an indirect advance, or more colloquially beating about the bush instead of going directly to a place or object he quotes. Golding's translation of Ovid, "Continued not directly forth but gan me down to stoupe. And fetched a windlasse round about" : and again, "Nor make windlass over all the champion fields about." **Assays of bias**—indirect attempts ; the bias was the weight put into the bowl, at the game of bowls, to make it travel in a curved path so as to avoid other bowls in its way, or to counteract the lie of the ground.

64. **Indirections**—oblique courses : cp. K. J. III. 1. 276, "though indirect, yet indirection the eby grows direct."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

65. **So by.....advice**—so by following out the lesson of advice I just now gave you. **Lecture and advice**—a hendiadys.

66. **You have me**—you understand me, take me.

69. **In yourself**—for yourself : not being content with what you hear of his conduct, but using your own observation also as to his tendencies.

71. **And let.....music**—probably, as it is generally taken, let him follow his own bent, strike what note he pleases ; though the first quarto reads "And bid him ply his musicke," which seems to be intended literally. **Well**—very good.

75. **Sewing in my closet**—occupied with needle-work in my own room.

76. **Doublet**—an inner garment, a double to the outer one, but used also for a coat generally. **Uubraced**—with the 'points not tied.

77. **Foul'd**—stained with dirt, muddy.

78. **Ungarter'd**—with no garters to his hose, or with his gartiers not fastened. **Down-gyved to his ancle**—allowed to fall down to his ancle, and so looking like the fetters around the ancles of a malefactor.

79. **Knocking each other**—knocking together in his agitation.

80. **So piteous in purport**—so expressive of misery.

82. **To speak of horrors**—only in order that he might tell of its horrors.

83. **Mad for tho love** ? distracted by hisintense love for you ?

85. **Held me hard**—grasped my wrist tightly.

86. **Then goes.....arm**—then stands back from me at the full length of his arm.

87. **Thus o'er his brow**—holding his forehead and shading his eyes so that he might fix his look more intently upon me.

88. **Persual**—earnest study.

89. **As he would draw**—it, as though he wished to paint it : literally as he would do if he wished to paint it.

90. **A little.....arm**—slightly shaking my arm.

93. **As it.....bulk**—that it seemed to shatter his whole trunk. **Bulk**—breast.

94. **That done**—after that.

95. **With his.....turn'd**—looking all the while over his shoulder.

98. **And to the last...me**—and till he disappeared in doorway, kept them fixed upon me.

100. **Ecstasy**—madness ; literally a standing out of oneself applied by Shakespeare to any violent emotion.

101. **Whose violent.....itself**—whose violent nature destroy itself : **Property**—that which specially belongs to it.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

105. **Hard words**—harsh answers to his entreaties.

106. **As.....command**—in obedience to your commands.

107. **Repel**—reject, decline to receive.

107-8. **Denfed.....me**—refused him permission to visit me.

109-10. **I am sorry.....him**—I am sorry that I did not observe him with greater care and judgment.

111. **Wreck**—ruin. **Beshraw**—a mild form of imprecation ; literally 'curse'.

112. **As proper.....age**—as much a characteristic of old men like myself.

113. **To cast.....opinions**—to over-reach ourselves by a belief in our far-sightedness.

114. **Sort**—class.

115. **Discretion**—discernment ; the old look too far ahead. the young do not look ahead at all.

116. **This must be known**—the king has a right to know this.

116-7. **Which, being.....love**—for if we kept this secret, the hiding of it might be more productive of grief than the aversion to utter it would be productive of love, i. e., the concealment of what has happened would be attended by more danger to us (if that concealment were discovered) than the good motive which actuated us would be attended by the love of those from whom we concealed it, even if, on its discovery, that good motive were credited. Polonius's sentiments are purely selfish, and he thinks nothing of the consequences to anyone else. "Hamlet's mad conduct might cause more grief if it were hidden than the revelation of his love for Ophelia would cause hatred, i. e., on the part of the King and Queen" ; but they admit that the Queen afterwards, iii. 1.38, and v. I. 230-2, expressess her approval of the match.

ACT II

SCENE II

Summary of the Scene :

Hamlet now appears to be mentally deranged. The King and the Queen are very anxious to find out the real cause of his mental derangement. The King and the Queen call Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two fello-students of Hamlet, to the court and appoint them to spy on Hamlet and to discover the real cause of his strange behav our by taking him into confidence. The two clever friends assure the King and the Queen to do their best to wring the secret from the heart of Hamlet.

As they take their leave Polonius appears. He has two important things to convey to the King. In the first place, he announces the return of the two ambassadors, Voltimand and Cornelius sent by Claudius to the King of Norway to protest against the aggressive activities of young Fortinbras against Denmark. In the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

second breath be announces that he has discovered the real cause of Hamlet's malady. The King cannot suppress his glowing anxiety to know the secret of Hamlets' obsession and requests the Chamberlain to tell him everything at once. But Polonius very tactfully and mischievously delays this topic and requests the King to admit the ambassadors to his presence and dispose of their business first. Polonius delights in keeping the King on tenterhooks by delaying a little longer what he has to say. The important state business of receiving the ambassadors must be transacted first and then his important news will follow, like dessert at the end of a banquet. The King gives way and the ambassadors thereupon make their report on the happy outcome of their visit to Norway. They report that the King of Norway compelled Fortinbras to desist from all aggressive designs against Denmark, but requested King Claudius to give formal permission to the forces of Fortinbras to pass through his territory in a campaign against Poland. The King congratulates the ambassadors on their success and invites them to dinner that evening for further talks.

Polonius then has his way. His childish vanity and self-complacency prompt him to make as much as possible of this great opportunity. With his usual pompus ceremony and confident credulity he declares that Hamlet has fallen in love with his daughter Ophelia and that her repulse of his advances, in compliance to her father's instructions, has made him mad. The cause of Hamlet's madness is, therefore, unrequited love. In proof of his assertion, the old man produces a love-letter addressed by Hamlet to Ophelia. This epistle merely consists of a quatrain, begging credenced for his love, and a few short sentences, in which he again confirms it. The King is startled by this revelation. In order to judge its import the King sought to know how far the love-affair had gone. The Chamberlain gives a detailed description of a certain sequence of symptoms, such as defection, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, weakness, and lack of blood in the brain, which give clearly defined picture of nervous disease that is not inconsistent with other facts already known to the audience. Hamlet's habit of walking up and down the gallery of the castle for hours on end, which is mentioned immediatelly afterwards, no doubt belongs to the same category Yet the cunning Claudius, in contrast with his rather foolish Queen, always easy to convince, will not accept the Lord Chamberlain's explanation so readily, and demands further proofs. This naturally wounds the vanity of Polonius, who has so good an opinion of his own wisdom that he boasts of being able to find out the truth even if it be hidden 'at the very center' of the earth and arrogantly wagers his head against his belief that he is on the right track. But his eagerness in the King's interest is so great that he allows his view to be put to proof in a way that does credit to his shrewdness ; he will bring about, as if by chance, a meeting between the Prince and his daughter, at which he will play the eavesdropper with the King.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Before they can proceed with their design Hamlet comes in, reading a book. Polonius at once urges others to leave him, then turns officiously to the Prince in an attempt to test his mental state by bluntly asking if he recognises him. Hamlet welcomes this chance to take advantage to his role of a madman in order to give full rein to his dislike for the conceited and tedious old man. He answers his question in the affirmative and then bewilders Polonius by calling him a fishmonger, an expression of contempt meant to prick his vanity. He continues to discourse to the disconcerted Polonius on subjects dear to those suffering from melancholia on the great rarity of honesty and the close connection between all that is highest in this world with all that is most vile, so that even the sun gives proof of its creative power by "breeding maggots in a dead dog." From this idea Hamlet's thoughts turn abruptly to Polonius's daughter. Pretending not even to know her, he asks coldly after her and advises her father to protect her from all contact with the world, because only thus will she escape an unwanted pregnancy, an example of the cynical contempt for women typical of the melancholic.

At this moment Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter, taking Hamlet by surprise. Dropping his pretence of madness he greets his friends with a coarse quip such as may well pass among young men. But their words are with intention so cheerful and reassuring, and in such complete contrast with his own mood, that his depression quickly returns. He sinks into philosophic meditation and says that what is true for them need not to be true for him ; "for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in an attempt to get to the bottom of Hamlet's melancholy, hint that he is suffering from unsatisfied ambition. The Prince, however, refutes this suggestion and by queer logic concludes that the unambitious beggar is the happiest man. He further suggests that Kings are the shadows of beggars. He tells his friends that he has lost all interest in life and all mirth, and he does not know why. He finds no delight anywhere ; man delights him not, nor woman either. His friends then ask whether he will take insterest in a troupe of players who wait on his pleasure. This news certainly interests Hamlet, and he learns from them that they are famous tragedians of the city who have been forced to become a travelling troupe under the stress of keen competition from a band of young boys who have won the favour of the populace.

Immediately the players arrive and Hamlet welcomes them. He welcomes each one with friendly chaff and impatiently begs them te give him some example of their powers at once in the form of a tragic speech. He refers to an old unsuccesful but very powerful play, the Tragedy of Aeneas and Dido. Hamlet remembers the speech of Aeneas and begins to declaim it. Addressed by Aeneas to Dido it recounts the fearful capture and burning of Troy, and describes the slaying of old Priam by Pyrrhus and the lamentation

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

of Hecuba. Hamlet gives a wonderful demonstration and then gives a number of highly practical suggestions to the players on the effective art of dialogues and oratory. The Prince then sends away the Chamberlain with a request to make adequate arrangements for the players. Drawing aside one of them, he asks him to arrange for playing the **Murder of Gonzago** the next night and insert in it a speech which he will specially compose for the occasion.

When left alone, Hamlet again falls in a reverie. He feels ashamed that he has so far done nothing to take revenge of his father's murder. But before proceeding further he wants to test the veracity of the ghost's verison of the tale of murder by subjecting his uncle Claudius to a psychological test. The tragedy of Gonzago is to be inacted for this purpose. Hamlet calls it Mouse-trap, a contrivance to catch the conscience of Claudius. The tragedy of Gonzago will enact on the stage a copy of the murder of his father and the marriage of the Queen with the murderer of the King. While the play is staged, he will watch the reactions on the face of Claudius. Hamlet gloats over the whole scheme and says : "The play is the thing to catch the conscience of the King."

Critical Comments :

This is a very important scene. The conflict between Hamlet and his uncle now advances a stage further. The summoning of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is the first movement in the king's counterplot against Hamlet. These two friends later play a very risky role, on the instigation of Claudius, in a conspiracy against the life of Hamlet, in which they themselves get entangled and die. They are the typical "shadow" character of the Elizabethan world whose only mission of life is to hang on their masters and courtiers Boas says : "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern recall the Salario and Salarino of *The Merchant of Venice*. It is a law of their existence for such personages to hunt in couples. Each seeks to compensate for an entire lack of individuality by an alliance with the other. Together they bow themselves in and out, they bandy tittle lattle and compliments, they smirk and wheedle, and fetch and carry in general. They are the indispensable quidnunes and hangers—on of the polite world."

The scene also throws much light on Hamlet's madness whether it is real or feigned. Even Polonius the most credulous old fool, has discovered some method in Hamlet's madness. Hamlet is certainly grief-striken and melancholy, but his madness is certainly feined. How could he have otherwise outwitted and befooled Polonius and the clever pair of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Again, the speech that he delivers from the tragedy of Dido and Aeneas and the precise and highly practical suggestion for effective acting that he gives to the players cannot be the work of a mad man. Hamlet is certainly feigning madness to execute his plan of revenge without much obstacle from Claudius.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

The scene also further reveals the character of Hamlet. Is Hamlet merely a brooding character incapable of any action ? The scene gives a different impression. Hamlet is certainly not a brooding type. At the same time he is neither too hasty nor credulous. He wants to ascertain the truth without the least shadow of doubt before proceeding with his plan of revenge. He wants to proceed cautiously so that there may be no mistake either in his judgment or action. He does not hastily believe even in the version of murder given by the ghost. Who knows the ghost might be an evil spirit tempting him on the path of destruction. Therefore he decides to subject Claudius to a psychological test by enacting in his presence a story of murder resembling the murder of his father. This psychological study will reveal the whole truth to him. Only after that he will proceed with his scheme of revenge. He is certainly a man of action and quick judgment. He later displays these talents of his when the occasion calls for them.

Notes :—

2. **Moreover that**—over and above the fact that.
3. **Provoke**—incite, instigate.
4. **Our hasty sending**—our sending for you in such haste.
5. **Transformation**—complete metamorphosis.
6. **Sith**—since.
7. **That it was**—that which it was. **What it should be**—what it is probable that it should be.

8-9. **That thus.....himself**—that has so completely estranged him from all knowledge of himself ; made it impossible for him to recognize what is proper, becoming to him.

10. **I cannot dream of**—I cannot conceive in the faintest degree by the wildest flight of imagination.

11. **Being.....him**—since you were brought up with him from your earliest days.

12. **And sith.....humour**—and as you have since then been so intimately acquainted with his youthful disposition, his disposition since he grew up to manhood.

13. **That**—redundant owing to the parenthesis. **Vouchsafe you rest**—be good enough to remain.

14. **Companies**—companionship.

15. **Pleasures**—indulgence in the way of amusements.

16. **So much.....glean**—so far as opportunity will enable you to pick up stray indications ; in a literal sense, to gather what is left of the corn after the field has been reaped and the sheaves tied together.

17. **Whether**—metrically a monosyllable.

18. **That.....remedy**—which, if made known to us, it would be in our power to cure.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

21. **To whom he more adheres**—for whom he has a closer regard.

22. **Centry**—courtesy.

24. **For the supply.....hope**—thereby to furnish us with the means of realizing our hope in regard to Hamlet ; thereby furnish us with a hope which may be converted into a certainty.

25. **Visitation**—visit : now more generally used for the appearance of some affliction.

26. **As fits.....remembrance**—as it is fitting for a king to show when hearing in mind a service rendered to him.

27. **Of us**—over us.

28-9. **Put your.....entreaty**--signified your desires, which are to a subject too awful to be disobeyed, in the shape of command rather than of entreaty. **But**--though you might have commanded rather than entreated, we are just as read to obey.

30. **In the full bent**—with the most thorough bending (of our energies) ; the figure is that of bending a bow to its fullest extent.

32. **To be commanded**—to be put to such purposes as you may direct.

34. **Thanks.....Rosencrantz**—the queen inverts the order of the king's form of thanks to snow that their gratitude was equally great to each of them.

37. **Bring**—conduct : as frequently in Shakespeare.

38-9. **Heavens.....him** !—God grant that he may find pleasure in our society and help in our action on his behalf.

41. **Are joyfully return'd**—have come back full of joy at the success of their mission.

42. **Thou still.....news**—you have ever been the author, parent, of good news.

44-5. **I hold.....king**—I keep my duty and my soul as equally things in trust to my God and to my king ; my soul to God, my duty to my king ; in **Hold**—there seems to be an allusion to feudal holdings.

46-8. **Or else.....to do**—unless the brain of mine follows up the trail of policy less keenly than it has been accustomed to do. **This brain of mine**—said with an affectation of humility which yet does not hide his complacent belief in himself ; in **Trail of policy**—there seems to be a blending of two ideas, (1) the trail left by events, as an animal leaves a trail behind him either by his foot-marks or by his scent, (2) the clue discovered by sagacious management.

50. **O, speak.....hear**—let me hear about that first and leave the subject of mission, as of much less interest to me, till, afterwards.

51. **First**—"thus Polonius gains the opportunity of studying a brief and pointed exopdium, the only fault in which is its being altogether needless and misplaced" (Moberly).

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

52. **The fruit**—what we now call the dessert (that which is served apart), *i. e.* fruits and sweetmeats (formerly) put on the table after dinner, or served in a different room.

53. **Thyself.....in**—do you pay them the compliment of bringing them in.

55. **Distemper**—here mental derangement ; but also used by Shakespeare for Physical sickness.

56. **The main**—the principal matter.

58. **Shall sift him**—shall discover by sifting him.

60. **Most fair.....desires**—most courteous reciprocation of your greetings and good wishes.

61. **Upon our first**—at our first audience with him to state the object of our mission. **Sent out**—issued orders.

62. **Levies**—acts of levying troops.

63. **'Gainst the polack**—against the Poles ; **polack**—used collectively.

64-5. **But..... highness**—but, having looked into the matter more closely, he found that this preparation was in reality directed against, etc.

66-7. **That so.....hand**—that he, in the powerlessness to which he had been reduced by sickness and old age, had been so imposed upon.

68. **In brief**—not to enter into details.

69. **Receives rebuke**—is rebuked by, and loyally accepts rebuke.

71. **To give.....majesty**—to make an attack upon, etc., to make trial of superiority by first attackidg, etc.

73. **In annual fee**—"the king gave his nephew a feud, or fee (in land), of that yearly value" (Ritson).

74. **Commission**—authority.

75. **So levied as before**—levied in the manner already mentioned.

76. **Shown**—set forth in writing.

77. **Quiet pass**—a free passage.

78. **This enterprise**—*i. e.* the troops to be engaged in this enterprise.

79. **On such.....allowance**—on such conditions regarding the security of your country and the limits of action to be allowed to them.

80. **It likes us well**—we are well satisfied.

81. **As our.....time**—at a time more suitable for consideration.

82. **Answer.....business**—give our deliberate answer regarding this business.

83. **Well-took labour**—service loyally undertaken and successfully carried out.

86. **Expostulate**—investigate by means of discussion.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

87. **Should be**—ought to be ; what its essentials are.

90. **Soul**—essence. **Wit**—wisdom.

91. **Outward flourishes**—mere ostentatious embelishements ; as in ornamental writing.

95. **But let that go**—but let that pass, never mind about further discussion of that point. **Matter**—what is material.

96. **Art**—"the Queen uses 'art' in reference to Polonius's stilted style ; the latter uses it as opposed to truth and nature" (Delius).

98. **Figure**—in the sense of a figure in rhetoric ; said of his own words "tis true".

100. **And now remains**—and it, or there, remains.

103. **For this.....cause**—for this result which is one of deficiency, is not without its own cause.

104. **Thus it.....thus**—that is the position of matters so far (*i. e.* I have stated the case as regards his being mad and of his madness being due to some cause or other) and now I come to my conclusion (showing what the cause is of the madness which I have demonstrated).

105. **Perpend**—weigh carefully what I am about to say.

106. **Have.....mine**—I say 'have', which is true so long as she is mine.

109 **The celestial.....idol**—the heavenly Ophelia, the object of my soul's worship. **Beautified**—Sc. by nature, *i. e.* beautiful. Dyce says 'the vile phrase' is common enough in our earlier writers, and Polonius's opinion in a matter of taste is certainly not final'.

113. **In her.....these**—an imitation of the form of address upon letters in those days ; *i. e.* I send these writings to her hoping they may find a place in, etc., letters being often treasured up in that way.

115. **I will be faithful**—I will keep nothing back, will reveal to you everything I know myself.

118. **Doubt.....liar**—suspect even truth itself of being, etc.

120. **Ill at these numbers**—a poor hand at writing verses. **Art**—skill, capacity.

121. **Reckon**—number ; his groans being innumerable ; Delius takes the word to mean "number metrically". **Most best**—better than all superlatives can express.

123-4. **'hilst.....him**—so long as he leaves. **Machine**—the body endowed with life.

126-8. **And more.....ear**—and over and above this has described to me all his solicitations, specifying when, how, and where they were made.

129. **What do.....me** ?—said with sorrowful reproach, do you suppose me to be so wanting in wisdom as to allow her to receive proffers of love from one so much above her in rank as a prince ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

131. **Fain**—gladly ; properly an adjective. **What.....think**—what might you not think, as we should now say.

132. **This hot.....wing**—this love borne upon so strong a wing ; a figure from birds in full flight.

133. **As I.....that**—for, I must tell you, I certainly did perceive it.

136. **If I had.....table book**—if I had shown myself of no more intelligence than a desk or memorandum book (which have secrets committed to their keeping, but no power to take any action regarding those secrets).

137. **Or given .....dumb**—or lulled my heart to sleep, so that my feelings should not trouble me.

138. **Or look'd.....sight**—or, recognizing the real importance of his love, had not taken such serious notice of it as I ought. There is a climax here.

139. **I went.....work**—instead of behaving in such a supine way, I proceeded to act with promptitude and firmness.

140. **Bespeak**—address with words of caution ; more commonly used of ordering something beforehand.

141. **Out of thy star**—far above you in his fortunes ; another allusion to the influence of the stars upon man's destiny.

142. **Prescripts**—instructions to govern conduct.

143. **Lock.....resort**—shut herself up where he could not gain access to her.

144. **Tokens**—sc. of love ; presents, etc.

145. **She took .....advice**—she followed, and profited by, my advice.

146. **Repulsed**—meeting with this repulse from her.

147. **Fell into ..... fast**—first sank into a state of melancholy, which was followed by hisabstaing from food.

148. **A watch**—a sleepless state.

149. **Lightness**—lightheadedness, flightiness. **By this declension**—by these downward degrees, this gradual passage from one state to another.

151. **And all we**—and which we all.

153. **Hath there been.....otherwise** ?—in all the years of my service as lord Chamberlain, can you call to mind a single occasion when I have made a positive assertion that has afterwards proved to be unfounded ? Polonius is deeply scandalized at the idea of his infallibility being called in question.

156. **Take this .....otherwise**—you may strike my head from my shoulders if what I tell you does not prove to be the fact ; said as he points to his head and shoulders.

157. **If circumstances lead me**—if I have any facts to guide me, any clue to follow up.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

159. **The centre**—sc. of the earth. **How may.....further ?**—what further test can we employ in order to arrive at certainty in the matter.

160. **Four hours**—used for a long, but indefinite, time.

161. **Lobby**—hall, ante-room, passage.

162. **Loose.....him**—allow my daughter to come out of her room to meet him.

163. **An arras**—a fold of tapestry.

164. **Encounter**—meeting.

165. **Thereon**—in consequence of his love.

166-7. **Let me.....carters**—let me no longer hold the responsible post I have so long held, but be sent to the country to busy myself with such a degrading pursuit as agriculture.

168. **Poor wretch**—poor unhappy fellow.

169. **Away**—make haste to conceal yourselves.

170. **I'll.....presently**—I'll attack him (*i. e.* in speech) immediately. **Give me leave**—excuse my interrupting you.

172. **Well, God-a-mercy**—well, thank God ; a contraction of 'God have mercy'.

174. **Excellent well**—thoroughly well. **A fishmonger**—various recondite explanations have been given of Hamlet's meaning here, especially by the metaphysical Germans ; the most simple one is Coleridge's that Polonius is regarded by Hamlet as being sent to fish out his secret—if, indeed, Hamlet meant anything more than to mystify the inquisitive old man.

177. **Honest, my lord !**—Polonius is indignant that his honesty should be doubted.

178. **As this world goes**—as times are now.

181-2. **Being a.....carrion**—though a God, yet stooping to kiss carrion.

185. **Look to't**—be cautions in the matter ; take care that she does not *walk i' the sun.*

186. **How say you by that ?** What do you think of that ? said to himself in congratulation upon his own acuteness in divining that hamlet's love for his daughter was the cause of his madness.

186-7. **Still.....daughter**—ever dwelling on the subject of my daughter ; ever harping on the same string.

188. **Far gone**—sc. in love.

189. **Suffered.....love**—suffered the extremest pangs for love's sake. **Very near this**—*i. e.*, and was almost as far gone as Hamlet.

192. **The matter**—the subject matter.

197. **Eyes.....gum**—eyes from which the rheum exudes of the colour and consistency of (liquid) amber or the gum of plumtrees.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

198. **A plentiful lack**—strictly speaking, a contradiction of terms. **Hams**—knee-joints.

199. **Most powerfully.....believe**—most thoroughly believe ; the exaggerated language is part of the plan to bamboozle the old man.

200. **Hold it not honesty**—do not consider it a gentlemanly sentiment to give utterance to.

200-2. **For yourself.....backward**—probably only intended to puzzle the old man. "The natural reason", says Moberly, "would have been, 'For some time I shall be as old as you are now' (and therefore I take such sayings as proleptically personal). But Hamlet turns it to the opposite."

203. **Method**—a certain orderliness.

204. **Out of the air**—out into the air.

206. **Pregnant**—a happy, felicitous turn of expression.

208. **Hits on**—lights on by accident.

208-9. **Could not.....of**—could not manage to express so pointedly and neatly.

210. **Means.....daughter**—measures by which he and my daughter shall be brought together.

213. **Withal**—the emphatic form of with, always in Shakespeare at the end of the sentence.

216. **These tedious old fools** !—believed of the empty verbiage of the old man, Hamlet at once returns to his natural self, though ready to assume his "antic disposition" at the appearance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

222-3. **Good lads.....both** ? my fine fellows, how are you both ?

224. **As the.....earth**—as men whose lot on earth is in neither extreme.

225. **Happy.....happy**—happy in the fact that we are not at such a dizzy height of fortune that we need fear a sudden fall ; a botton being often placed at the top of the cap where they seams meet.

231. **Then is doomsday near**—then must the end of the world, the day of judgement be at hand.

232. **More in particular**—more closely as to the particulars of your situation.

237. **Then is the world one**—then must the whole world be a prison, if Denmark, so happy and free, is one.

238. **Confines**—chambers in which the lunatics are shut up ; more usually in the sense of boundaries, limits.

239. **Dards**—cells.

242. **But thinking.....so**—unless it is made so by thinking it to be good or bad.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

244. **Your ambition.....one**--it seems to you so because you are too ambitious to be satisfied with your own subordinate position ; an attempt to sound Hamlet as to the cause of his discontent.

246. **I could..... nutshell**—I could easily be satisfied with narrowest limits.

249-50. **For the very.....dream**—for that on which the ambitious feed their minds is even less substantial than a dream, it being merely the reflection of a dream.

254-5. **Then are.....shadows**—in that case (sc. if ambition is of so airy and light a quality), since it is only our monarchs and heroes who "bestride the narrow world like a Colossus" (J. C. i. 2. 134, 5,), that are ambitious, it follows that our beggars (who are the antitypes of the monarchs and horoes) must be the true bodies (the really substantial existences) of which the monarchs and heroes are but the shadows.

257. **We'll wait upon you**—we will attend you thither.

258. **No such matter**—I cannot allow of that, sc. of your waiting upon me ; taking the words in a more literal sense than was intended by the speakers.

258-60. **I will.....attended**—I will not put you on a level with the rest of my servants, for, to tell you the truth, I am very badly served, those servants of mine are a bad lot, said as if he were confiding to them some strange and important secret the telling of which needed the assurance that he was speaking the honest truth.

260-1. **But.....Elsinore** ? but, to ask you in the ordinary way of friendship, to ask you a question usual among friends, what has brought you to Elsinore ?

262. **Occasion**—cause, motive.

263. **Beggar.....thanks**—so utterly a beggar am I that I have hardly thanks to give you. **But I thank you**—still I do thank you.

264-5. **Were.....for** ? I fancy you were sent for by the king (in order that you, as my old and intimate acquaintances, might find out what was the matter with me).

265-6. **Is it.....inclining** ? did you come of your own accord ?

266. **Is it.....visitation** ? have you come to visit me of your own free will ?

267. **Nay, speak**—may, do not hesitate, but speak out.

268. **Should we say**—ought we to say ; do you wish us to say ?

269. **Why.....purpose**—an intentionally enigmatical sentence which might bear either of two meanings, (1) say anything so long as it is to the point, (2) say anything except what is to the point. Hamlet has divined clearly enough the reason of this sudden appearance of his old companions.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

270-2. **There is colour**—I can see in your looks a sort of confession which your natural ingenuousness prevents you from disguising as you would do if you were more crafty.

273. **To what end**—with what object.

274. **That.....me**—nay, that is for you to tell me, not for me to guess.

275-8. **By the rights.....no** ? by the claims which our long friendship give me, by the fact of having been brought up together in such close companionship, by the ties of affection which have ever bound us to one another, and by anything even more secred to which a more skilful advocate could persuasively appeal, tell me in plain and straight-forward terms whether, etc.

279. **Ney, then.....you**—ah, if you hesitate and whisper together, I see, plainly there is something you wish to hide, my eye is upon you and you cannot deceive me. **An eye-of you**—as "a glimpse of your meaning", but surely Hamlet has a good deal more than a 'glimpse'.

281. **Hold not off**--do not keep aloof from me (figuratively) do not hesitate to speak out plainly.

283. **I will tell you why**--I know that, and will tell you with what object.

283-5. **So shall.....feather**--by forestalling you in explaining with what object you were sent for, I shall save you from revealing it yourselves, and your good faith to the king and queen, which binds you to secrecy in the matter, will not suffer in the smallest particular. **Prevent**—go before and so hinder (put behind, stop). **Moult no feather**--literally lose none of its feathers, as birds do at certain seasons of the year.

286 **Forgone.....exercises**—completely abandoned all those exercises which were customary with me ; such as fencing, horsemanship, etc.

287. **It goes.....disposition**—it fares so sadly with the tone of my mind, my mood has become so desponding.

288-9. **Most excellent canopy**—supremely beautiful covering. **Brave**—glorious, splendid.

290. **Fretted**—ornamented.

292. **What a piece**—*i. e.* what a wonderful piece.

293. **In reason**—in the matter of reason. **Faculty**—mental power, literally, facility in acting.

294. **Moving**—movement, carriage of the body. **Express**—"exact, fitted to its purpose, as the seal fits the stamp."

294-5. **The beauty of the world**—the supreme excellence of creation. **The paragon of animals**—peerless among things endowed with life. **Pargon**—"a model of excellence".

297. **Quintessence**—literally the fifth essence, the pure essence of anything.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

299. **No such stuff**—nothing of the kind ; my mind was not filled with any such thought.

302. **To think**—at the thought.

303. **Lenten entertainment**—poor, scanty welcome ; from the spare diet prescribed during the fast of lent.

304. **Coted**—overtook and passed ; the word in the "technical sense is applied to a brace of greyhounds slipped together at the stag or hare, and means that one of the dogs outstrips the other and reaches the game first"...(Ed. Rev., Oct. 1872).

307. **Shall have.....me**—shall receive from me the tribute of applause, as a king receives tribute of money, etc. ;

The adventurous knight—the knight errant who goes in quest of adventures.

308. **Shall use.....target**—shall have full opportunity of displaying his valour. **To lover..... gratis**—the lover shall be rewarded for playing his pathetic part.

309. **The humorous.....peace**—The capricious man shall have his full opportunity of venting his spleen.

310. **Tickle o' the sere**—"the sere.....of a gun lock is the bar or balance lever interposed between the trigger on the one side, and the tumbler and other mechanism on the other side. Hence 'light', or 'tickle of the sear'..... applied metaphorically, means that which can be started into action at a mere touch, or on the slightest provocation or on what ought to be no provocation at all" (Nicholson). Here, ready to laugh at the smallest joke.

311-12. **The lady.....for't**—the lady shall talk as freely as she likes, or the fault of her not doing so shall lie in the halting character of the blank verse.

314. **City**—by this word "Shakespeare's public at once understood London" (Delius).

315. **Travel**—are 'on a tour in the province', as we should now say.

315-6. **Their residence.....ways**—it would be better for them as regards both fame and profit, if they stayed in the capital.

317-8. **I think.....Innovation**—Steevens explains, "Rosencrantz means that their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away in consequence of the new custom of introducing personal abuse into their comedies. Several Companies of actors in the time of Shakespeare were silenced on account of this licentious practice". For a very long period there had been a strong opposition in the city to theatrical performances. Inhibitions, or refusals to license theatres, had occurred in 1573, 1574, 1575, 1581, 1589, 1590, 1597, and other measures to restrain the abuses of the actors had been taken during this period. "It is difficult therefore to see at what precise period the explanation offered by Steevens could be true. In 1604 the indulgence of the actors in personal abuse could hardly be called an 'innovation' ; on the contrary, it was practice

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

from which the stage had never been entirely free. "They therefore conjecture that the 'innovation may refer to the authority given to the children to act at the regulary licensed theatres, a permission which might have operated as an 'Inhibition' upon the older actors by driving them into the country. They also point out that nothing is said about 'inhibition' or 'innovation' in the quarto of 1603, and first mention of the words being in the quarto of 1604, and "it is to the interval therefore that we must look for the explanation."

319. **Do they.....estimation**—are they held in the same esteem as etc.

320. **So followed**—so much run after.

322. **Nay.....pace**—not in the least, they take just as much pains to please.

324-5. **Cry.....Question**—probably means 'declaim at the top of their shrill, querulous voices' ; as though their speeches were one perpetual shriek of interrogation. **Tyrannically clapped**—Fiercely applauded.

326-8. **And so.....thither**—and make such an uproar on the common stages (*i.* e., the stages occupied by the ordinary player)—as they contemptuously call them—that many of man's estate (as shown by their wearing swords) are afraid to face these pigmies whose only weapon is a goose quill (*i. e.*, that are merely armed with the words put into their mouths by the play-writers).

330. **Quality**—profession of acting.

331-4. **Will they not.....succession** ?—will they not hereafter say, when they come to be men and are obliged to content themselves with being ordinary actors (such as they now despise)-which in all probability is what will happen to them, unless they find some more lucrative occupation-that the authors whose plays they act, by putting such words into their mouths, are doing them a wrong in making them call out against that very occupation they must inherit ?

335-8. **Faith..... .....question**—indeed, there has already been much dispute on this point, and both sides have been pretty actively engaged, the children and the ordinary actors each attacking the other, while the nation is not ashamed to fan the flame of the quarrel ; to such an extent has this gone on that for a time the stage companies would give nothing for argument in a play unless in the dialogue poet and player were ready to belabour one another, the poet running down the ordinary actor and the ordinary actor retaliating on the poet, *i.e.* the poet was called upon by those who employed him to dramatize the quarrel, himself representing one side and the ordinary actor the other.

340. **Much.....brains**—plenty of lively fighting.

341. **Carry it away**—come off best in their rivalry with the older players.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

342. **That they do**—assuredly they do : an emphatic assent. **Hercules.....too**—most completely ; Steevens thinks there may be an allusion to the Globe theatre, the sign of which was Hercules carrying the globe.

343. **It is.....strange**—there is nothing very strange in this change of fashion.

343-4. **For mine.....that**—*i.e.*, for now that my uncle is king, those that, etc. **Mows**—grimances.

346. **A piece**—each as his share. **In little**—in miniature.' **'Sblood**—(by) God's blood, *i.e.*, as taken in the encharist.

347. **If philosophy.....out**—if philosophy, which is so proud of its achievements, could only find it out.

350-1. **Come than**—*i. e.*, do not hesitate to shake hands with me.

The appurtenance.....ceremony—ceremonious courtesy is an essential part of welcome.

351-3. **Let me comply.....yours**—let me show courtesy to you by the outward formality of shaking hands, lest in that welcome which I shall hold out to the players,—a courtesy that must be evidenced by formal civilities,—I should seem to be giving them a warmer reception than I do to you.

357. **I am.....north-north-west**—I am mad only in one quarter of my mental compass.

When the wind.....handsew—when the wind is southerly with me (*i. e.*, not in the quarter in which alone I am mad) I can distinguish between a hawk and a heron. Heath explains as follows ; "The expression obviously refers to the sport of hawking. Most birds especially one of heavy flight like the heron, when roused by the falconer or his dog, would fly down, or with the wind in order to escape. When the wind is from the north, the heron flies towards the south, and the spectator may be dazzled by the sun, and be unable to distinguish the hawk from the heron. On the other hand, when the wind is southerly, the heron flies towards the north, and it and the pursuing hawk are clearly seen by the sportsman, who has then his back to the sun, and without difficulty knows the hawk from the heron."

359. **Well be with you**—may things be well with you ; probably a piece of Polonius' pedantic affectation.

360-1. **At each.....hearer**—a curious way of saying 'let each of you land me an ear, *i.e.*, listen to me.

362. **Swaddling-clouts**—The clothes in which infants are swathed or enwrapped.

363. **Haply**—pasibly, perhaps.

364. **An old.....child**—so we speak of extreme old age second childhood.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

366-7. **You say.....indeed**—it is just as you say : it did happen on Monday morning : said merely to prevent Polonius from guessing that they had been talking about him.

369. **My lord.....you**—nay, my lord (mimicking his address), first bear what I have to say ; **You**—emphatic.

372. Buz, Buz ! nonsense, nonsense ! probably as Steevens says, "only interjection employed to interrupt Polonius", or rather, perhaps, to disconcert him.

374. **Then came.....ass**—probably a line from an old ballad.

377-8. **Scene.....unlimited**—the former "refers to dramas that carefully observed the unity of place" ; the latter "to those that disregarded such restrictions" (Delius).

379. **For the law.....liberty**—for those plays in which the law of dramatic composition are observed, and equally for those which are law unto themselves, and themselves every kind of licence these, etc.

381. **Jephthah**—one of the twelve judges of Israel, when it was under that form of government, who going to fight against the Ammonites, vowed that if successful against them, he would sacrifice to the Lord the first thing that met him on his return home. His daughter coming out to welcome him was accordingly offered up.

385-6. **'One fair.....well**—from an old ballad on the subject published in percy's Reliques, in 1757.

387. **Still on my daughter**—still thinking of my daughter.

389-90. **If you.....well**—if by Jephthah you mean me, I like him have a daughter whom I love most dearly. **Passing**—surpassingly exceedingly.

391. **Nay, that follows not**—Hamlet uses follows in an ambiguous sense, (1) that is not a necessary consequence, (2) those are not the words that follow in the ballad ; and when Polonius takes them in the former sense, Hamlet replies in the latter.

397-8. **The first to.....comes**—the first verse of the pious (*i e.* scriptural) ballad will tell you more, and to that I must leave you, for see, there come those who interrupt me.

401. **Is valanced**—has become fringed with a beard : the 'valance' in the beds of former days was the drapery which hung from the bedstaff to the ground ; the word is supposed to be derived from Valance, in France, not for from Lyons, a city still celebrated for its silks. **To bread me**—to defy me ; of course said jestingly.

402. What.....mistress ; what, is that you, my young lady whom I remember so well ? **By'r lady**—by our lady, *i. e.* the Virgin Mary. Until after the Restoration women's parts were acted by men.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

404. **Chopine**—'chopines', 'chapineys', as Coryat calls them, were contrivances of wood covered with leather which ladies, especially those of Venice, wore under the shoe to add to their height. Furness mention that he was present at a Jewish weddidg in Jerusalem, in 1856, when the young bride, aged twelve, wore chopines at least ten inches high.

405. **Cracked within the ring**—*i. e.* cracked beyond all use ; coins cracked within the ring running round them were no longer current. The voice is said to crack when,at the age of puberty it gradually passes from the "childish treble" to a more manly fulness. having during the transition a cracked sound.

406-7. **We'lle'en.....see**—we will set to work upon some dramatic performance or other, whatever may come most readily for the moment. This has been taken as a sneer at French sportsmanship, but Tollet quotes Sir T. Browne that "The French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe, "and Cl. Pr. Edd. add a passage from the same author in which is mentioned a falcon of Henry of Navarre "which Scaliger saith, he saw strike down a buzzard, two wild geese, divers kites, a crane and a swan."

441-3. **The million**—the multitude.

413-4. **'Twas.....general**—it was not appreciated by the common herd of play goers ; **Cavire**—the preserved roe of the sturgeon, a delicacy new in Shakespeare's day, and not generally relished. **As I received it**—in my opinion.

415. **Cried.....mine**—were of greater weight than mine ; out went mine in authority. Henley says, "To over-top is a hunting term applied to a dog when he gives more tongue than the rest of the cry", *i.e.* pack.

416. **Well.....scenes**—the scenes of which were well arranged.

417. **Modesty**—properity. **Cunning**—skill. **One said**—it was said by somebody.

418. **No sallets.....savoury**—nothing piquant to give the lines a relish ; no indecencies to suit vicious tastes. **Salletes**—another form of salads, preparations of garden green-stuff, mixed with oil, vinegar, mustard, etc. and used as a relish with meat.

418-20. **Nor no.....affection**—nothing in the language which could charge the author with affection. **As wholesome as steet**—equally healthy in tone and pleasant.

421. **By very.....fine**—with a very great deal more of real beauty in it than of tawdry splendour ; "rich not gaudy", as Polonius recommends that Laertes' dress should be, i. 2.71.

422. **Thereabout of it**—about that part in it.

426. **Hyrcanian beast**—*i. e.* the tiger. Hyrcanian Sea, is frequantly mentioned in old English writers as the habitat of tigers, the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Hyrcan tiger being by them regarded, like the Bengal tiger of to-day as the symbol of deadliest ferocity.

430. **Couched.....horse**—Pyrrhus, or Neoptolemus son of Achilles, was one of the band of heroes who concealed themselves in a wooden horse they had constructed, and which Sinon induced the Trojans to receive within their gates.

In the side of this horse was a door which Sinon at nightfall unlocked, and his fellow Greek being let out opened the gates of the city and with the rest of the Grecian army sacked Troy.

432. **With heraldry more dismal**—with a tincture (as it is called in heraldry) of more dismal colour.

433. **Total gules**—one mass of blood.

435. **Baked.....streets**—which (sc. the blood) was caked into a thick crust by the beat of the streets ; the city having been set on fire by the Greeks. Or perhaps better referred to 'Pyrrhus'.

436-7. **That lend..... murders**—which by their accursed light give the Greeks a cruel opportunity for their etc. **Roasted.....fire**—ablaze with wrath and fire.

438. **O'er sized**—smeared over as with size ; a gluey substance. **Coaguelate gore**—blood curdled by the best.

439. **Like carbuncles**—as crimson as carbuncles.

441. **So, proceed you**—go on from that point.

445. **Striking.....Greeks**—unable to reach his opponents with his sword.

446. **Rebellious to his arm**—refusing to obey his arm : *i. e.*, his arm being too weak to wield it.

447. **Unequal match'd**—in the strength of his youth more than a match for the old man.

448. **In rage strikes wide**—In his fury misses his blow.

449. **But with the whiff**—with the mere whiff.

450. **Unnerved**—sc. by bodily weakness. **Senseless**—though, as a material thing, without feeling.

452. **His**—its.

453. **Takes.....ear**—so stuns his that his action is arrested.

454. **Declining**—about to fall upon. **Milky**—milk-white with age.

456. **As a.....tyrant**—like the figure of a tyrant in the old tapestry hangings ; ep. Macb. v. 8.23-5, for a similar image, "we'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are painted upon a pole, and underwrite, 'Here you may see the tyrant."

457. **And like.....matter**—and like one who inclines neither to one party nor to the other : his **Will**—one party.

Matter—the stroke of his sword, the other.

459. **Against**—in anticipation of, shortly before

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

460. **The rack**—"a mass of vapoury clouds. 'The winds in the upper region, which move the clouds above (which we call the rack)", (Dyce).

462. **Hush**—hushed, silent.

463. **The region**—"originally a division of the sky marked out by the Roman augurs. In later times the atmosphere was divided into three regions, upper, middle, and lower. By Shakespeare the word is used to denote the air generally" (Cl. pr. Edd). So climate from meaning the region of the earth lying in the same paralled of latitude, has come to mean the condition of a region as regards its atmospheric phenomena.

464. **Aroused.....a work**—his vengeance stirred to double fury by the pause he had been constrained to make.

465. **Cyclops**—the cyclops were Titans, sons of Uranus (heaven) and Ge (earth), who, as the assistants of Hephaestus (Vulcan) forged armour, etc., for the gods and heroes.

466. **Forged.....eterne**—so forged as to be for ever proof against all strain put upon them.

467. **Remorse**—pity ; as usually in Shakespeare, not the regret felt for some ill doing, the only modern sense.

470. **In general synod**—assembled in full conclave ; their decision being thus made more solemn.

471. **Fellies**—or felloes, the outer circumference of the wheel through which the axle passes and the spokes radiate.

475. **Its hall.....beard**—it like your beard, shall pay a visit to the barber's shop.

476. **He's for a Jig**—he (sc. Polonius) would prefer a jig, *i. e.*, a ludicrous composition in verse, something that he could laugh at. **Or he sleeps**—or she is drowsy, and does not care to be awakened by anything so stirring in character.

478. **Mobled queen**—queen muffled up in a cap. : the word mobcap, as Coleridge points out, is still used of a large cap, worn more commonly by old women of the lower classes in the early morning, and differing but little from a night-cap. The picture is of the aged Hecuba roused up from bad by the alarm of fire.

480. **That's good**—Polonius, who had objected to "beautified" (1.109 above) as "a vile phrase", speaks with patronizing approval of this affected expression.

481-2. **Threatening.....rheum**—threatening the flames that she will put them out with her blinding tears. **Bisson**—literally purblind. **Clout**--a piece of cloth, which she has snatched up in her hurry ; used contemptuously.

483. **For**—in place of.

484. **O'erteemed loins**—"exhausted by child-bearing" Priam was said to have had fifty-two children by her.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

486. **Who this had seen**—any one who had witnessed so sad a spectacle as this.

487. **'Gainst.....pronounced**—would have railed against the majesty of Fortune in the most treasonable language ; ep. A. Y. L. ii. 7·16, "And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms."

492. **Unless.....all**—unless, as Philosophers say, they are utterly indifferent to the concerns of men.

498. **Would have.....heaven**—would have drawn tears from the burning eyes of heaven, as milk is drawn from the udder of a cow. **Milch**—milky ; a 'milch-cow' is still in common use.

494. **And passion.....gods**—and would have excited deep compassion in the gods.

495-6. **Look.....eyes**—see if he (sc. the player) has not turned pale, and if the tears are not ready to fall from his eyes, he having entered so thoroughly into the pathos of the scene.

497. **Speak out the rest**—complete the speech.

498. **Well bestowed**—comfortably lodged.

499-500. **The abstracts .....time**—the compendium in which the events of the time are summarized.

500-1. **You were better have**—it would be better for you to have.

502. **I will use.....desert**—I will treat them as men in their station of life deserve to be treated.

503. **God's bodykins**—by God's little body ; an affectionate inrreverent adjuration.

504. **After**—according to. **Who should**—*i. e.* nobody would.

505. **After your.....dignity**—with such courtesy and condescension as befits man in your high position.

512. **For a need**—if it was necessary.

521. **Peasant slave**—wretched bondman.

523. **But in.....passion**—under the influence of nothing more real than a poet's creation, a mere imaginary passion.

524. **Could force..... conceit**—could so constrain his soul into sympathy with the idea which he had made his own in interpreting it.

525. **That from.....wann'd**—that from the emotion of his soul his face became pale.

526. **Tears.....aspect**—that tears showed themselves in his eyes, frenzy possessed his looks.

527-8. **A broken.....conceit**—his voice became broken with sobs, and all the faculties of his body took shape from the idea in his mind. The various particulars of his emotion are generalized in the last clause.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education & HS, Bantalab Jammu

530-1. **What's Hecuba.....her** ?—what relation is there between Hecuba and him that he should so sympathize with her woes ? *i. e.* there is no such relation.

532. **Cue**—indication, prompting ; literally the last words in the player's acting copy of the speech preceding that which the player is himself to deliver.

534. **And cleaves.....speech**—and spilt the ears of his audience with the horror of his words.

535. **Make mad.....free**—drive those conscious of guilt to downright madness and fill with terror even those whose conscience was clear of guilt.

536-37. **Confound.....ears**—utterly bewilder the ignorant, and so amaze spectators and hearers that they would not know whether their faculties were their own, whether they were not under some horrible hallucination.

539. **Muddy-mettled**—dull brained, sluggish-natured.

540. **John-a dreams**—i. e., John of dreams—a sluggish, sleepy, fellow. **Unpregnant of my cause**—with my mind utterly barren of all designs to effect my purpose ; with a mind that as yet has conceived no methed of action.

542. **Property**—everything that belonged to him.

543. **A damn'd.....made**—ruin was brought down by most accursed means.

544. **Who calls me villain** ? does any one call me villian ? i. e., any one might do so without fear of consequences.

Break.....across—breaks my head from one side to the other, perhaps with an illusion to the clumsiness of these who in tilting broke their spear across the body of their antagonist and not by a direct thrust.

545. **Blows it in my face**—gives it to the wind to blow it into my face, thus adding to the insult of plucking it out.

546. **Tweaks**—pulls ; a word always used in a contemptuous sense.

546-47. **Gives me.....lungs**—there were various gradations of giving the lie ; as the simple "Thou liest" ; then "Thou liest in the throat" ; "Thou liest in the throat like a rogue as thou art" here the lie is one who does this to me ?

549. **'Swounds, I should take it**—by God's wounds (*i. e.*, those inflicted upon Christ in His crucifixion), I should accept the insult without retaliating.

549-51. **For it.....bitter**—for clearly I must have the liver of a pigeon (*i. e.*, be no more courageous than the timid pigeon), and be utterly wanting in that spirit which feels and resents and injury the liver was of old supposed to be the seat of courage, passion, love, etc.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

552. **Fatted**—fattened. **All the region kites**—all the kites of this part of the country.

553. **Offal**—refuses ; "formerly used of chips of wood falling from a cut log ; and.....merely compounded of off and fall.

554. **Remorseless**—pitiless. **Kindless**—without natural feeling.

556. **Most brave**—said ironically.

558. **By heaven and hell**—by heaven, as shown by the prodigies seen ; by hell, in its sending the spirit of the dead king to stir me up.

559. **Must.....words**—cannot help exhibiting my fury in mere words. **Unpack**—an allusion to peddlers opening their packs and displaying their wares.

560. **A cursing**—*i. e.*, on cursing.

561. **As cullion**—a sharp-tongued kitchen wench.

562. **About my brain** ? be active, my brain ? stir yourself to some design ?

564. **Cunning**—skill with which the scene was portrayed.

565. **Presently**—at once.

567-68. **Will speak.....organ**—will make itself known by most miraculous means : cp. Temp. iii. 3.96.9, "Methought the billows spoke and told me of it ; The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder, that deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced. The name of prosper ; it did bass may trespass.

571. **I'll tent—.....quick**—I'll probe him to the sensitive point **Tent**—"to search with a tent, which was roll of lint for searching or cleaning a wound or sore" (Dyce). **The quick**—the living, sensitive, part. **Blench**—shrink.

572. **I know my course**—I shall at once know how to proceed ; the present tense indicates the instantaneous knowledge which will then be his.

575. **Out of**—by means of.

576. **As he is.....spirits**—for such spirits are allies which he turns to the fullest use.

577. **Abuses.....me**—misleads me with the object of making me commit some great crime which will consign me to perdition.

578. **More relative**—more pertinent, and so more conclusive.

579. **Catch**—snare.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ACT III

SCENE I

Summary of the Scene :

The scene opens on a momentous day. Several events of great importance are going to occur on this day. The scene opens with a dialogue between the king and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The two friends come to report to the king that they have not quite succeeded in extorting the secret from the heart of Hamlet. However, the king requests them to continue in their endeavours.

As these two friends leave the court, Polonius and the king decide to proceed with their plan of secretely overhearing the conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia. The king therefore asks the Queen to leave them and Ophelia alone in the chamber. Polonius proceeds to lay his trap for Hamlet ; Ophelia is shown to her place, instructed in her part. and given a book which she should pretend to be reading. She agrees to everything with her customary acquiescence. Polonius, for the first time, feels the pricks of conscience that he should play the spy on Hamlet and Ophelia and that he should lay a trap on Hamlet in order to conceal his own sin and guilt. The sleeping conscience of the king stirs unexpectedly.

Hamlet now enters conversing with himself in a soliloquy. He weighs the relative value of life and death. What is more becoming to human dignity : patiently to endure an existence full of injustice or to make an end of everything by attempting to oppose overwhelming forces ? To come to a decision on such a question one would have to know whether death itself is anything more than a sleep. It is because the possible afflictions of an after-life are unknown that men are ready to endure the worst of sufferings and refrain from escaping such difficulties by taking their own lives. Robbed of the power of decision their natural will to act is weakened. Conscience prevents action ; thinking is the enemy of doing. These reflections, which come from the abyss of despair that Hamlet has now reached, are deeply moving, presented as they are with remarkable dramatic skill. Every word of this soliloquy betrays the deepest melancholy, the oppression that weighs down those that are weary and find the burdens they must bear too great for their strength.

The soliloquy comes to an end as Hamlet perceives Ophelia, apparently absorbed in her prayer-book ; he greets her good humouredly in momentary forgetfulness of his supposed madness. Ophelia now begs him to take back the presents he has previously given her, which now, owing to his change of attitude, have lost all value for her. But Hamlet pleads that he knows nothing of any presents. He has put Ophelia out of his mind and has abandoned himself of his melancholy and pessimism, which have turned him into an argumentative moralizer, hostile to women. He addresses

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

her as though she were a complete stranger and, warns her in characteristically didactic fashion that she should cling to her virtue, endangered by her beauty, at a time in which corruption is rife. At all events his pessimism does not allow him to believe in women who are beautiful and at the same time virtuous ; a complete distrust of female virtue. Therefore he comes to the conclusion that life should be denied and he advises Ophelia to go to nunnery. Once again he speaks of the utter falseness and moral and spiritual depravity of women. He seems here to be thinking of his mother, but this is by no means certain, because he is evidently working himself up into a state of morbid excitement.

At the outset Ophelia has listened to him submissively, answering, so far as possible, simply and with her usual quiet sadness. She has met his wildest accusations with sighs and prayers ; but once alone she voices her inconsolable grief at the apparent havoc of which she is the witness, and indeed of which she must needs consider herself to be the victim. In her description of the young Hamlet, we can for the first time discern him as he once was, before the cloud of melancholy descended upon his spirit ; the embodiment of what, to that age, was the ideal of human perfection. courtier, soldier, and scholar in one.

Polonius and Claudius now leave their hiding-place. The outcome of the meeting has not come up to their expectations. The king rejects Polonius' theory of Hamlet's obsession. He is convinced that the Prince has "something in his soul, over which his melancholy sits on brood". The king therefore proposes to send away Hamlet to England on some pretext. Polonius, however, wants to put Hamlet to one more test before he is sent to England. He proposes that a meeting should be arranged between Hamlet and his mother and their confidential talk should he overheard by Polonius. The king agrees to this plan.

Critical Comments :

In this scene Claudius takes one more futile step in throwing a trap on Hamlet. Claudius and Polonius 'act in a very unchivalrous and even dishonourable manner in a bid to fathom the secrets of Hamlet. Imagine two venerable fathers acting as eavesdroppers on their own children ! Claudius's guilt has brought him down to such levels. Again, it is in this scene that Claudius's wounded and suppressed conscience revolts against itself. He repents for the first time, though this repentance is only skin deep.

This scene is specially remembered for Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "To be, or not to be." This soliloquy, though not very important for the advancement of the plot, is extremely significant, for it lays bare the tormented mind of Hamlet. Hamlet has been labouring hard between thoughts of life and death. It accords remarkably well with the general psychological attitude of the Prince ;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

for every word betrays the deepest melancholy, the oppression that weighs down those that are weary and find the burdens they must bear too great for their strength. Those that suffer of necessity see suffering everywhere and find the world full of tribulation. What oppresses the soul of Hamlet is injustice, disdainful treatment, lack of appreciation, unhappiness in love and so on ; all that wounds his dignity. It is a very proud, though wounded soul that speaks here. The unhappy Hamlet, whom we have seen in his solitary moments wholly absorbed by his own feelings has now taken refuge in philosophy. He puts the full bitterness of his lot into words

The scene also reveals the delicate feelings that Ophelia cherishes for Hamlet, but which, under the command of her father, she suppresses to the best of human efforts. In an admirable passage she gives out how high she thinks of Hamlet and how in his derangement a noble mind has been overthrown.

Notes :

1. **Drift of circumstance**—roundabout method.

2. **Get from him.....confusion**—find out from him weat has led him to behave in this excited manner.

Puts on—as incite, instigate, but the two next lines show that the confusion refers to Hamlet himself only.

3-4. **Grating.....lunacy**—thus disturbing his peaceful life with outbursts of dangerous madness ; the figurative sense of grating is from the literal sense of two bodies roughly rubbing against each other.

6. **He will.....speak**—he cannot by any method be persuaded to say.

7. **Forward to be sounded**—inclined to let us find out what is at the bottom of this mind.

8. **But with.....aloof**--but with a cunning such as is seen in mad people holds us at a distance.

11. **Most like a gentleman**—with the greatest courtesy.

12. **But with.....disposition**—though he was evidently very ill inclined to have much to do with us.

13-4. **Niggard.....reply**—if question is used in its ordinary sense, this statement is not true, for Hamlet had plied them well with questions of various kinds, whereas they can scarcely be said to have made any *Demands* of him. Warburton therefore would transpose. **Niggard and Most free**—against this it may be urged that Hamlet could not be said to be niggard of his answers when none were required him. Malone and others take. **Question**—as conversation, discourse, a sense which it often bears in Shakespeare. But here again we are as far from the fact as ever, for Hamlet conversed with them freely on a variety of subjects. The real explanation seems to be that suggested by the Cl. Pr. Edd, that 'perhaps they did not intend to give a correct account of the interview'. Possibly after

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet's generous forebearance is not forcing them to a confession as to the reason of their coming, they may have felt some scruple of delicacy in betraying what they knew ; probably they felt that if they reported much of the conversation it would be discovered how completely Hamlet had seen through them, what poor diplomatists they had shown themselves. **Of our demands**—as regarded our demands.

14-5. **Did you.....pastime** ?—did you rest him as regards his inclination to take part in any amusement ?

17. **O'er-raught**—passed ; literally over-reached.

20. **As I think**—I believe. **They.....order**—they have already received orders.

23. **Matter**—in this word, accorning to Delius, there is a tinge of contempt.

24. **Doth much content me**—is a great satisfaction to me.

26. **Give him.....edge**—it seems doubtful whether this means 'Sharpen his inclination', or 'push him towards', in which sense we commonly use the verb to 'egg'. The next line seems to indicate the latter meaning.

29. **Closely**—privately, secretly.

31. **Affront**—meet face to face, confront : the only sense of the word in Shakespeare, whereas its only meaning now is to 'insult', from the ideal of meeting with too bold a face.

32. **Lawful espials**—who may justifiably act as spies in such a matter.

33. **Bestow ourselves**—station ourselves.

34. **Encounter**—meeting, interview. **Frankly**—freely.

35. **And gather.....behaves**—and infer from his behaviour.

36. **Affliction of his love**—the passionate love he feels.

37. **That thus.....for**—which causes him to suffer in this way.

38. **For your part**—as regards you.

39. **Your good beauties**—the fascinations of your great beauty. **Be the happy cause**—may happily prove to be the cause.

40-2. **So shall I.....honours**—for in that case I shall be able to cherish the hope that your various virtues will restore him to his usual healthy state of mind, with a result honourable alike to him and to you.

43. **Gracious**—addressed to the king. **So please you**—provided it is agreeable to you.

44. **Bestow ourselves**—place ourselves where we shall be unseen. **Read on**—fix your eyes on as though reading.

45-6. **That show.....loneliness**—the appearance of your being occupied in that way will account for your being here all alone

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

46-9. **We are.....himself**—we are often guilty, as only too common experience shows, of coating over our intentions, vile as the devil himself, with looks of sanctity and pious acts.

51. **Beautified.....art**—which owes its beauty to rouge, etc.

52. **Is not.....it**—is not more ugly in comparison with the thing to which it owes its beauty.

53. **Than is.....word**—than are my actions in comparison with the specious language in which I dress them up ; **Most painted**—thickly plastered over with specious words **Deed**—does not refer to the particular deed of murdering his brother, but to his base actions generally.

56. **To be.....question**—whether to continue to live or not, that is the doubt I have to solve.

57. **Whether.....mind**—whether it shows a nobler mind.

58. **Slings**—properly that which casts a stone, here the missile itself. **Outrageous**—violent, cruel.

59. **A sea of troubles**—many pages have been written upon the incongruity of taking arms against a sea, but a **Sea of troubles** is a common expression in other languages besides English for a host, immensity, of troubles, and the mixture of metaphors is not greater than in many passages of Shakespeare

61. **No more**—*i.e.* for death is nothing more than a sleep. **To say we end**—to assure ourselves that we thus put an end to, etc.

63-4. **'Tis a...wish'd**—that is a conclusion for which we may well pray.

65. **There's the rub**—there is the difficulty ; if we could be quite sure that death was a dreamless sleep we should not need to have any hesitation about encountering it. **Rub**—obstacle, a metaphor from the game of bowls.

66-8. **For in.....pause**—for the doubt as to what dreams may come in that sleep of death, when we have put off this encumbrance of the body must compel us to hesitate when considering the question of suicide ; though, **Coil** is elsewhere used by Shakespeare as-turmoil, tumult, and may here include that meaning also, the words **Shuffled off**—seem to show that the primary idea was that of a garment impeding freedom of action.

68-9. **There's the respect.....life**—in that lies the consideration which makes misfortune so long lived ; if it were not for that consideration, we should quickly put an end to calamity by ending our lives.

70, **The whips.....time**—the blows and bouts to which one is exposed in this life ; here time seems to be opposed to eternity, as in Macb. i.7.6, "If.....that but this blow Might be the be all and the end-all here. But here upon this bank and shoal of time, we'ld jump the world to come." **And the whips and scorns**—to be a general expression for the particulars in the next four lines, "the oppressor's wrong", "the law's delay", "the insolence of office",

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant.

coming under the head of whips, and "the proud man's contumely," "the pangs of despised love," and "the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes", under that of scorns. It is, however, possible that of time may be equivalent to "of the times."

73. **The insolence of office**—the insolent behaviour with which men in office treat those who have to sue to them.

74. **That patient..... takes**—that men of merit have patiently to endure at the hands of those who have no claim to respect. Furness remarks, "In the enumeration of these ills, is it not evident that Shakespeare is speaking in his own person ? As Johnson says, these are not the evils that would particularly strike a prince."

75. **His quietus**—his release, acquittance. **Quietus**—was the technical term for acquittance of all debts at the audit of accounts in the Exchequer, and is used as late as Burk's, Speech on Economical Reform.

76. **With a bare bodkin**—with a mere dagger. Though Shakespeare probably had in his mind the idea also of an unsheathed dagger, his primary idea seems to be the easiness with which the release could be obtained, and he word bodkin, a diminutive-small dagger, goes to confirm this notion. Among other passages in which the word occurs. **Fardels**—burdens.

77. **Grunt**—groan ; the word, though now having a ludicrous association., had none to the ears of our forefathers.

79. **Bourn**—boundary, confines.

80. **No traveller returns**—to the cavil that this is in opposition to the fact of the ghost of the king having re-visited the earth, Coleridge conclusively replies, "If it be necessary to remove the apparent contradiction,—if it be not rather a great beauty,—surely it were easy to say that no traveller returns to this world as to his home or abiding place". **Will**—resolution.

84-5. **And thus.....thought**—and thus over the natural colour of determination there is thrown the pale and sickly tinge of anxious reflection.

86. **Of great pitch and moment**—of soaring character and mighty impulse. **Moment**—seems to me to be used here for 'momentum', 'impulse', the sense which the word appears to have in A.C. i. 2. 147, "I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment."

87-8. **With this.....action**—influenced by this consideration, divert their course, turn themselves from the path along which they were going, and no longer can be said to the active.

88. **Soft you** ! said to himself, 'but let me pause !

89. **Nymph**—literally bride, was a title given to female deities of lower rank. **Orisons**—prayers.

90. **Be all.....remember'd** !—may you remember to ask pardon for all my sins ! to intercede for me.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

91. **How does.....day** ?—how have you fared for these many days during which I have not seen you ?

93. **Remembrances**—tokens of love given to ensure being remembered.

94. **Longed long**—long been most desirous.

97. **You know.....did**—you know well enough, if you choose to remember, that you did give them to me, trifles though they may now seem, not worth remembering.

99-100. **Their perfume.....again**—now that you no longer have kind words to give me, take back the remembrances which those words made so dear to me.

100-1. **For to.....unkind**—for, to a mind of any nobility gifts, however costly, lose all their value when their givers change from what they were when they bestowed them.

102. **There, my lord**—said as she offers to return his gifts.

103. **Honest**—virtuous, modest.

107-8. **That if.....beauty**—that if you be virtuous and fair, your virtue should not allow itself any intercourse with your beauty.

109-10. **Could beauty.....honesty** ?—Ophelia, with a woman's wit, inverts the terms of the proposition by asking whether beauty could associate with anything more profitably than with virtue.

111. **Ay truly**—yes, assuredly it could, so far as the interests of virtue are concerned.

113-4. **This was.....proof**—this was at one time considered a strange idea, but the present time have shown that it is a mere truism. **Paradox**—literally that which is contrary to (received) opinion.

117-8. **For virtue.....it**—for virtue cannot so graft herself upon human nature but it shall smack of its original depravity. **Inoculate**—the technical term for the bud which is grafted on to another tree.

120. **I was the more deceived**—then my mistake was all the greater.

121. **Why wouldst thou**—why should you desire.

122. **Indifferent honest**—fairly honourable as men go.
Indifferent—used adverbially.

123. **It were better**—it would be better.

125. **At my beck**—read to come at my summons, whenever I choose to beckon to them. **Thoughts.....in**—thoughts in which to clothe them.

127-8. **What should.....heaven** ?—what business have such wretched fellows as myself to be crawling, like noxious reptiles, on earth and aspiring to heaven ? **Arrant**—thorough, utter ; "a variant of errant, wandering, vagrant, vagabond, which from its frequent use in such expressions as arrant their, became an intensive, 'thorough,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

notorious, downright', especially from its original associations, with opprobrious names" (Murray, Eng. Dict.).

132. **Shut upon him**—shut against his going out.

138. **Needs**—of necessity.

139. **What monsters.....them**—an allusion to the old belief that horns grew out of the forehead of men whose wives had been unfaithful to them.

142. **Your paintings**—the rouging of the complexion so common among your sex. **Your**—used generally.

144. **Jig**—are given to loose dances. **Amble**—walk with a mincing gait.

144-5. **Nick name God's creatures**—are not content with calling God's creatures by their right names, but must invent foolish and ribald ones for them. **Creatures**—both animate and inanimate. **And make.....ignorance**—and when charged with immodest behaviour plead ingenous simplicity as your excuse.

146. **I'll no more no't**—I will allow no more of such goings on ; no't, of it, sc. your behaviour.

148. **One**—sc. the king. "This exception would be quite unintelligible to Ophelia, but the audience, who are in Hamlet's secret, see its purport" (Cl. Pr. Edd.). **Keep as they are**—remain unmarried.

151. **The courtier's.....sword**—*i. e.* the eye of the courtier, the tongue of the scholar, the sword of the soldier ; Hamlet according to Ophelia, being endowed with the sprightly look of the courtier, the learning of the scholar, and the skill in arms of the soldier.

152. **The expectancy.....state**—the hope and chief ornament of the state, thus beautified by him. **Fair**—is used proleptically, which was made fair by wearing him (as a rose in a dress, coat, etc.).

153. **The glass of fashion**—in whom was reflected all that was in the highest fashion, the most perfect good taste. **The mould of form**—the model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves.

(Johnson).

154. **The observed of all observers**—he whose conduct and carriage was closely observed by every one as an example to be followed. **Quite, quite down**—now utterly overthrown.

155. **Deject**—dejected, broken-spirited ; for the omission of the participial termination.

156. **That sucked.....vows**—who so greedily drank in his honeyed words of love ; Ophelia combines what is sweet to the taste and sweet to the ear.

157. **Sovereign**—the supreme power in the state of man.

158. **Like sweet.....harsh**—like bells naturally of a sweet tone, rung in such a way as to be out of tune with each other, and so harsh-sounding.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

159-60. **That unmatch'd.....ecstasy**—that peerless form and feature of youth in its full bloom now cruelly marred by madness (as a flower in bloom is blasted by a storm). **Feature**—is used by Shakespeare for the person in general (and especially of dignified) appearance.

161. **To have.....see**—that I should have known him as he once was, and should know him as he now is.

162. **Love !.....tend**—you say that love is the cause of his madness ! nonsense ! the bent of his mind is not in that direction.

163. **Though it.....little**—though it was somewhat incoherent, unmethodical.

165. **On brood**—a brooding.

166-7. **And I do.....danger**—and I suspect that when the outcome of it is seen, we shall find it something dangerous. **Disclose**—"is when the young just peeps through the shell." It is also taken for laying hatching, or bringing forth young.

167. **Which for to prevent**—in order to anticipate which.

168-9. **I have.....down**—I have with prompt determination decided. **He shall**—sc. be sent, go.

170. **For the.....tribute**—to demand the tribute of money due to us, which they have neglected to pay.

171-5. **Haply.....himself**—possibly the variety of novel sights which in his voyage he will behold will drive out this matter which has to some extent settled in his heart, and which by his brains constantly beating on it has changed him from his usual self.

176. **It shall do well**—the plain is certain to answer.

Yet—still (in time), not, notwithstanding what you say.

177-8. **The origin.....love**—a redundancy for, the origin and commencement are from', etc. How now, Ophelia ! what brings you here ?

181. **If you.....fit**—if you agree with me as to the propriety of doing so.

184-5. **In the ear.....conference**—where I can hear all that passes between them. Polonius insinuates that from maternal affection the queen may not faithfully report the interview, and also perhaps that his wisdom is necessary to judge of the real meaning of what Hamlet may say with an accuracy that could not be expected of a woman. **Find him**—discover his secret.

187. **Your wisdom**—you in your wisdom.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ACT III

SCENE II

Summary of the Scene :

This scene takes us to a hall in the castle where Hamlet appears in the company of players. The players are getting ready to enact the tragedy of Gonzago. The prince is in his normal mood. He does not show any signs of madness or abnormality. He speaks to the players on the principles of sound acting. The end of acting is to hold the mirror up to Nature. The actor should not, therefore, overstep the modesty of Nature either by overacting or shouting too loudly in a bid to impress the audience. He specially warns the clowns not to show themselves ludicrously. The players then retire to give finshing touches to their preparations for acting.

Hamlet then calls Horatio, whom he has kept informed of all that has happened since the appearance of the ghost, so that he can now help him to observe the king during the performance of the play. This is Hamlet's psychological test of the king. If the king could witness the performance of the play (which enacted, a tragedy resembling the old King's murder) with normal emotional equanimity and composure, then the ghost must be an evil spirit trying to lead them astray. If however Claudius should betray an uneasy conscience, then his guilt is certain. Hamlet's further course of action by way of revenge or otherwise would be determined by the outcome of his psychological test. Horatio assures him that he will very carefully observe the king and help him in his project.

Now the King and Queen accompanied by Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive at the hall. The players are ready. The Queen asks Hamlet to sit by her side but he prefers to sit at the feet of Ophelia. Ophelia, casually remarks to Hamlet that he is in a jolly mood. This remark stings Hamlet and he says that all men and women have nothing else to do but be jolly. Does not his mother look cheerful, even though her noble husband died only a little while ago. This further provokes Hamlet to a cynical outburst on the short and treacherous memories of men.

The play now commences, beginning with a dumb show. It is a pantomime serving the purpose of a prologue. In this pantomime a king and a queen appear on the stage, manifesting deep love for each other. The king then lies down to sleep and the queen leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the king's ears. The queen returns, finds him dead and makes passionate lamentation. The poisoner returns, wooes the queen with gifts ; she seems unwilling a while but soon after accepts his love and they walk away in pair. The pantomime has its desired effect.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Then commences the play proper. A king and a queen appear on the stage. The manifest deep love for each other. The king recalls the thirty years of their happy married life, but now he is old enough to be snatched away by death any day. He advises his queen to marry again after his death. The queen emotionally protests against such an idea and says that no woman would ever marry a second husband unless she herself murdered her first one. She vows eternal constancy. The king feels drowsy and soon falls asleep. The queen leaves him sleeping. The king's nephew then appears on the stage and pours a deadly poison in the ears of his sleeping uncle.

Claudius cannot bear the sight any more. He loses his self possession, turns pale and shakes violently. He abruptly orders the players to stop the show forthwith and leaves the hall.

Hamlet obviously succeeds in catching the mouse in his trap. He has caught the very conscience of the king. He is greatly excited and exchanges impressions with Horatio. The truth is out. The king's guilt speaks through his head. He is prepared to take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds.

The queen then sends for Hamlet. He sends word to her that he will meet her shortly.

Critical Comments :

Here we have the justly famous 'play within a play'. Hamlet calls this shorter play a 'mouse trap'. Claudius is the mouse with a guilty conscience and Hamlet catches this conscience of the king within his trap. It is an infallible psychological trap which leaves absolutely no doubt in Hamlet's mind that Claudius is the murderer of his father. It is a double-edged weapon : it convinces Hamlet of the guilt of his uncle, and at the same time it makes it clear to Claudius that Hamlet knows the whole secret of his guilt. The stage is now ready from both sides to come out with their schemes openly.

The action of the play has now reached the point of crisis. Now two movements go simultaneously—one concerned with Hamlet's plot against the king and the other with the king's counterplot against Hamlet. So far, Hamlet was guiding the action of the play, but hence forward the initiative passes on to the king and the counterplot gains momentum.

Commenting upon this scene, Coleridge remarks : "The dialogue of Hamlet with the players is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Notes :

2. **Trippingly on the tongue**—with an easy delivery. **But if you**—before these words we must supply some such clause as 'and then all will go well ! **Mouth it**—deliver it in a bombastic manner.

3. **Your players**—many players that you and I know well. **Had as lief**—should be as willing. **Lief**—literally dear, beloved, pleasing. **The town crier**—who shouts out proclamations, notices, etc., in the streets.

4. **Saw the air**—more your arms up and down in emphatic gesture.

5. **Use all gently**—in everything set with a quiet dignity.

5-7. **For in.....smoothness**—for even when your passion is at its highest pitch, you must learn to employ a restraint which shall make it go smoothly off.

8. **To the soul**—to the very depths of my nature.

8-11. **To hear.....noise**—to hear a big blustering bully in a wig utterly ruin the expression of strong emotion merely in order that the thunder of his tones may win the applause af the pit, fellows for the most part incapable of appreciating anything but an intelligible dumb shows and noise. **Periwig**—Steevens points out that in Shakespeare's time players most generally wore periwigs. **Groundings**—the frequenters of the pit, who stood on its floor ; no benches being provided in that part of the theatre ; the suffix-lings gives a contemptuous flavour to the word.

12. **I would**—*i.e.* if I had my way. **O'erdoing**—exceeding in violence. **Termagent**—"was one of the idols.....the Saracens are supposed to worship. This personage was frequently introduced into the old Moralities, and represented as of a violent character the word is now used only of a boisterous; scolding woman.

13. **Out herods Herod**—Out does Herod in fury. **Herod**—in the old Mystery plays being always represented as violent, in reference to his slaughter of the innocents in the hopes of killing Christ, whose advent had been prophesied.

14. **I warrant your honour**—I promise you I will avoid all such extravagances. **Your honour**—a title of respect.

14. **Be not.....neither**—at the same time take care to act with sufficient spirit.

17. **With.....observance**—specially observing, taking note of this.

18. **The modesty of nature**—the limits of natural moderation : such moderation as nature dictates. **From**—away from, and so opposed to.

19. **End**—object, purpose. **At the first and now**—from the earliest times of the theatre to the present.

21. **Feature**—shape, form. **Scorn**—apparently objects of contempt.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

22. **The very.....pressure**—give the period of time represented its exact form and image in every particular. **Time**—being regarded as something living is endowed with Age and body. **Pressure**—impression taken as it were in wax.

22-3. **Now.....off**—now if you overdo this on the one hand, or fall short of it on the other. **Unskilful**—*e. g.* the "grounding".

24-6. **The censure .....others**—the opinion of one of whom (sc. good judges) you must admit would far outweigh a whole theatre full of ignorant persons ; that *censure of the which one*—the opinion of the one of which class (though it be a licentious expression) is, I think, clearly proved by a whole theatre of others.

27-8. **Not to.....profanely**—of whom I hope I may without profanity say.

28-9. **That neither.....man**—who not being able to speak like Christians, and in the matter of carriage resembling neither Christian, pagan, or man at all.

30. **Journeymen**—apprentices.

30-1. **Had made men**—had been making men ; not all mankind, but these actors.

33. **Indifferently**—pretty thoroughly.

34. **With us**—in our company.

35-7. **And let.....them**—do not let them follow the example of those actors who are always ready to insert something of their own into the speeches they have to deliver ; to 'gag', as it is now called in theatrical parlance,—a practice common in Shakespeare's day and, carried to great lengths. **Of them**—among them (sc. the players).

37-38. **To set on too**—to incite some of the more barren witted of their audience to join in the laugh.

38-40. **Though.....considered**—though at the time some important point in the play has to be dealt with. **Pitiful**—contemptible.

41. **Use it**—is guilty of the practice.

43. **And that presently**—not only hear it, but hear it at once.

48. **Sweet lord**—a common form of address in Shakespeare's day. **At your service**—ready to attend your wishes.

49. **E'en as just a man**—as thoroughly upright a man.

50. **As e'er withal**—as ever I have meet with in my intercourse with men. **Conversation**—in the older and more literal sense of mixing with, associating with men.

52. **Advancement**—preferment.

54. **Why should.....flatter'd** ? what good could there be in flattering ?

55-7. **No, let.....fawning**—no, let the man of sugared words spend them upon foolish pomp (*i. e.*, those who absurdly boast them-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

selves of their grandeur), and how their supple knees in those cases in which their adulation is likely to be rewarded by gain. **Thrift**—gain.

58-60. **Since my.....herself**—since my soul, so precious a possession, was capable of making choice, and could distinguish among men, her choice has been irrevocably fixed upon you.

61. **As one.....nothing**—like one who, though enduring every misfortune, seems unconscious that he is enduring any.

63. **With equal thanks**—with the same imperturbability.

64. **Whose blood.....commingled**—in whom passionate feeling and judgement are mingled in such due proportion.

65-66. **That they.....please**—that fortune is not able to do what she will with them ; the 'stops' in a wind instrument are the holes upon which the fingers are placed to regulate the passage of sound.

67. **Passion's slave**—the slave of uncontrolled emotion.

68. **My heart's core**—the centre of my heart, or as he goes on to say, the heart of his heart. **Core**—being more than the Lat. cor, heart : most frequently used of the heart of fruits.

69. **Something too much of this**—Clarke remarks, "The genuine manliness of this liitle sentence, where Hamlet checks himself when conscious that he has been carried away by fervour of affectionate friendship into stronger protestation than mayhap becomes the truth and simplicity of sentiment between man and man, is precisely one of Shakespeare's touches of innate propriety in questions of feeling."

70. **Before the king**—*i. e.*, to be acted before the king.

71-2. **Comes.....death**—closely resembles in detail the manner of my father's death of which I have already told you.

73. **That act**—that part of the drama. **Afoot**—in process of being represented.

74. **Even with.....soul**—with the most intense direction of every faculty" (Caldecott).

75. **Occulted**—hidden ; here only in Shakespeare.

76. **Unkennel**—discover : literally to loose from the kennel.

77. **Damned**—apparently used in a double sense, condemned to hell, and accursed in having deceived us.

79. **Stithy**—forge ; formerly used for both the forge and the anvil ; here what we now call the 'smithy.' *i. e.* place where the smith works. **Give.....note**—mark him most carefully.

80. **Rivet**—fix immoveably.

81-2. **And after.....seeing**—and when the play is over we will compare our impressions as to his behaviour during it, and see what conclusions we come to.

CC-0. Gandhi Memorial College Collection. Digitized by eGangotri Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

83-4. **If he steel.....theft**—if during the play any guilty look our movement of his escapes my notice, you may punish me as you like for having allowed myself to be duped by him.

85. **I must be idle**—I must appear to be utterly unconcerned with the whole business, not seem in the least interested in watching how things go. Some editors understand **Idle**—to mean 'mad', 'crazy' : but the point is that while Horatio is free to give his whole attention to the king's behaviour, without being noticed, Hamlet for fear of being suspected of having planned the scheme, must appear to take no interest in the proceedings ; and therefore in the next line he tells Horatio to secure a seat for himself where he may see clearly what effect the play produces, and to leave him to stroll about alone, lest being together they might seem to have some secret understanding between them.

87. **How fares.....Hamlet** ? how are you, cousin ?

88-9. **Excellent.....so**—Hamlet pretends to take the king's words to mean what fare (food) is set before you ? and therefore answers, capital fare, from the chameleons' dish ; I, like that animal feeding upon air, for my diet is promises, which are not more substantial than air ; you can feed animals like the chameleon and myself upon such food, but you will not find it fattening for fowls.

90-1. **I have.....mine**—this answer has no connection with my question.

92. **No, nor mine now**—a reference, says Johnson, to the proverb, "A man's words are his own no larger than he keeps them unspoken."

93. **University**—Shakespeare had in his mind the plays acted at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge by the under-graduates, and sometimes by professional actors.

96. **Julius Caesar .....Capitol**—here, as in Julius caesar Shakespeare mistakenly places the murder of Caesar in the Capitol, through in reality it took place in or near Pompey's theatre.

98. **A brute part**—a brutal act on his part.

100. **Stay.....patience**—are waiting till you shall give them permission to begin.

102. **Here's metal more attractive**—Ophelia being the magnet.

104. **In your lap**—at her feet, with his head resting against her lap, as he goes on to explain. Steevens says that to lie at the feet of a mistres, during any dramatic representation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

110. **Your only jig-maker**—only your composer of jigs.

112. **Within's two hours**—within this period of two hours ; less than two hours ago.

117-8. **He must.....then**—if he wishes to keep his memory green, he must leave behind him some visible remembrance of himself. **Not thinking on**—oblivion.

119. **The hobby-horse**—"a personage belonging to the ancient morris-dance.....made.....by the figure of a horse fastened round the waist of a man, his own legs going through the body of the horse.....but concealed by a long foot-cloth ; while false legs appeared where those of the man should be, at the side of the horse..... Latterly the hobby-horse was frequently omitted, which appears to have occasioned a popular balled, in which was this line or burden, 'For O, the hobby-horse is forgot" (Nares).

122-3. **Makes.....him**—goes through the action of earnestly declaring her love for him.

123-4. **Takes.....neck**—raises her from her kneeling position and lets his head fall upon her neck. **Lays him down**—lies down.

126. **Kisses it**—to show how precious it is in his sight, how dearly he would like to wear it.

128. **Makes passionate action**—makes demonstration of deepest sorrow.

134. **Miching mallecho**—secret mischief.

135. **Belike.....play**—probably this dumb-show indicates the plot of the play. **Belike**—*i. e.* by likelihood.

136. **We shall...fellow**—we shall soon find out from this fellow.

137. **Keep cousel**—keep a secret.

144. **Here...clemency**—which here humbly submits itself to you, hoping for merciful judgement.

146. **Posy**—motto, frequently in verse, engraved upon a ring.

149. **Phoebus 'cart**—the chariot of the sun-god.

150. **Done**—ended.

157. **You are.....late**—you have lately been so sick.

158. **So far.....state**—so different from your usual cheerful self.

159. **Distrust you**—am anxious about you.

160. **Nothing**—in no way.

161-2. **For women's.....extremity**—for women's fear and love are equally disproportionate to the object, being in either case much lese or much greater than they should be.

163. **Proof.....know**—you have learnt by experience.

165. **The littlest.....fear**—even the smallest doubt as to the well being of the loved one becomes fear.

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

166. **Where little.....there**—where small fears exaggerate themselves into great ones, you may be sure that great love is present there ; the figure in the latter clause is that of knowing a tree from its fruit.

168. **My operant.....do**—my active faculties cease to perform their functions. **Live behind**—survive me.

171. **O, confound the rest** !—shame on what you were about to add ! i. e. pause before uttering such shameful words as are in your thought.

172. **In second accurst**—if I marry a second husband, may I find in him everything that is hateful.

173. **Such.....breast**—such love if entering my heart would be treason.

174. **But who**—except those who.

175. **Wormwood, wormwood**—*i. e.* that stings him bitterly ; as we say that's gall and wormwood to him. **Wormwood**—a very bitter plant still used in France in the manufacture of 'absinthe', and 'vermouth'. The word has really nothing to do with either worm or wood.

176. **Instances**—inducements ; the word is used by Shakespeare in a variety of meanings ; motive, inducement, cause, symptom information, proof, etc.

177. **Base respects of thrift**—mean considerations of gain.

178-9. **A second.....bed**—*i. e.* I will never allow a second husband to kiss me, never wed a second husband. **Ki l.....dead**—a not uncommon redundancy, expressive of thoroughness.

182-3. **Purpose.....validity**—determination easily yields itself captive to memory (*i. e.*, passes away when that which gave it birth is forgotten), it being robust enough when first formed, but soon losing its strength.

185. **But fall.....be**—but which (sc. the fruits) fall, etc.

186-7. **Most necessary.....debt**—it is only right and proper that we should be allowed to forget the payment of a debt which is due only to ourselves, *i. e.* omit, if we think fit, to carry out a resolution which concerns ourselves and nobody else.

188-9. **What to ourselves.....lose**—that which under the influence of strong feeling we propose to ourselves as a course of action when that strong feeling passes away, loss its motive.

190-1. **The violence.....destroy**—the violence of either grief joy destroys those passions, and at the same time puts an end to the execution of their purposes.

192. **Where joy.....lament**—excessive indulgence in joy is followed by excessive abandoment to grief ; laughter and tears are divided by the thinnest partition.

193. **Grief.....accident**—a very slight incident turns grief into joy, joy into grief.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

194-6. **This world.....change**—nothing, not even the world itself, is everlasting, and therefore it is not strange that even our love should change with change of fortune.

196-7. **The green.....flies**—the greater man having fallen from his high estate, you see his former favourites at once quit his side.

198. **For 'tis.....love**—for it is a point still undetermined whether love or fortune proves itself the stronger influence when the two are opposed.

199. **The poor.....enemies**—the man of humble rank raised to a high position finds his former enemies quickly turn into friends : not 'makes friends with his enemies'.

200. **And hitherto.....tend**—and upto this time love has been found to wait on fortune, to accommodate itself to fortune.

201. **Who not needs**—he who does not need.

202. **Hollow**—insincere ; (cp. lear, iii. 156). "Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound Reverbs no hollowness".

203. **Directly.....enemy**—by that very act causes him to show in full flavour that ill will which had before been hidden.

204. **Orderly.....begun**—to return in due order to the point from which I set out.

205. **Contrary**—in such opposite directions to each other ; for instances of words in which the accent is nearer the end than with us.

206. **Still are overthrown**—are constantly being upset.

207. **None of our own**—not in the least in our power.

209. **Die thy thoughts** —let such thoughts perish.

210. **Nor earth.....light** !—may the earth fail to, etc.

211. **Sport.....night** !—may the day shut me out of all enjoyment, the night fail to give me repose !

212. **To desperation.....hope** !—may my expectations and hope turn, etc.

213. **An anchor's.....scope** !—may a hermit's fare be the utmost I can hope to enjoy ! **Anchor**—a shortened form of anchoret, or anchorite a rercluse, one who has retired from the world.

214-5. **Each opposite.....destroy** !—may that which is most hostile to joy, and by its appearance causes joy's radiant face to turn pale with fear, encounter everything to which I wish success, and ruin it !

218. **If she.....now**—how terrible if after all her protestations she should now prove unfaithful to her first husband !

220. **My spirits grow dull**—weariness is creeping over me.

221. **Rock**—as in a cradle.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

224. **Doth.....much**—is too full of protestations of love and loyalty.

225. **O, but.....word**—O, but you will see that she will etc., : said ironically.

226. **Argument**—plot.

226-7. **Is there.....in't** ?—does it not seem to you an objectionable one ? "The king means a moral 'offence', and Hamlet means a physical 'offence (or crime), as in i. 5. 137." (Delius).

231. **Tropically**—figuratively.

232. **Image**—exact representation.

234. **A knavish piece of work**—sc. the murder. **But What O' that** ?—but that matters nothing.

235. **Free**—innocent of all crime.

235-6. **Let.....unwrung**—let those shrink who from their consciousness of guilt feel themselves galled by such a representation ; we who are innocent need not complain. **Withers**—the ridge between the shoulder blades of a horse on which the strain of the collar falls. **Are unwrung**—escape being galled.

239-40. **I could.....dallying**—if I could see you and your love in amorous converse, I should be able to tell what was passing between you, just as I am able to explain who Lucianus is. Hamlet likes Ophelia and her lover (*i. e.*,—any one with whom she might be in love) to puppets. "An interpreter, says Steevens, "formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet shows, and interpreted to the audience."

242. **So you must.....husbands**—that's how you must take your husbands, sc. for better, for worse : a reference to the ritual of the marriage ceremony in which the husband and wife each engage to take the other "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health", etc.

243. **Leave.....faces**—have done with all the contortions of your face.

243-44. **The croaking.....revenge**—Simpson says this is a satirical condensation of two lines of The True-Tragedie of Richard the Third, "The screeking raven sits croking for revenge, whole herds of beasts come bellowing for revenge."

246. **Confederate season**—"the opportunity conspiring to assit the murderer" (cl. Pr. Edd.) **Else.....seeing**—on one but myself being here to see what I do.

247. **Rank**—noisome, foul. **Of.....collected**—extracted from herbs gathered at midnight.

248. **With Hecate's.....infected**—blasted by a triple curse of Hecate's end so ferribly poisonous.

249-50. **Thy natural.....immediately**—appears to be generally taken to mean 'let your natural magic, etc., usurp 'no' etc. But it seems doubtful whether **usurp**—does not govern. **Natural magic and**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

dire property—in the sense of exercise your innate magic and baneful qualities with wrongful force on healthy life.

251. **For's estate**—in order to get possession of his kingly dignity.

256. **What .....fire** ?—what, alarmed by a mere fiction !

261-62. **Why, let.....play**—i.e., some must suffer while others meet with no harm, and so almost an equivalent to the next line.

263. **Watch**—keep awake.

264. **So runs.....away**—such is the course of the world. Evidently a snatch from some old balled, chanted by Hamlet not necessarily as applying to what has happened, but in exultation at the success of his scheme.

265. **A forest of feathers**—i. e., with appropriate costume. Malone says it appears from Decker's Gull's Hornbooke that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakespeare's time.

265-6. **If the rest.....me**—if I fail in every other way to get my livelihood. **Turn Turk**—a proverbial phrase for any change of condition for the worse, used specially of changing one's religion. **Provincial roses**—rosettes as large roses of Provence, at the mouth of the Rhine, in France.

267. **Razed shoes**—slashed shows, shoes with ornamental cuts in the fore part, a fashion revived of late in the case of ladies' shoes. **Get me.....players**—procure me a partnership in a company of actors. **Cry**—more usually of a pack of hounds, from their giving tongue, hence a troop generally.

268. **A share**—"the actors in Shakespeare's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares of which the proprietors of the theatre.. had some ; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit". (Malone).

269. **A Whole one, I**—I should expect a whole one.

270. **O Damon dear**—my dearest friend ; an allusion to the friendship of Damon and Phintias, which was proverbial for its sincerity, the former having offered to suffer death in place of the latter.

271. **Dismantled**—robbel : properly used of stripping a house of its hangings, etc.

273. **Pajock**—peacock ; Dyce observes "I have often heard the lower classes in the north of Scotland call the peacock the 'peajock', that in the natural history of Shakespeare's time the bird was the accredited representative of inordinate pride and envy, as well as of unnatural cruelty and lust, and that the word here expresses in a concentrated form the odious qualities of the guilty king."

274. **You.....rhymed**—sc. by substituting "ass" for pajock.

275-6. **I'll take..... pound**—I'll wager a thousand pounds that the ghost spoke the truth about my father's death. **Pound for**—the concrete sum, as frequently in Shakespeare.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

278. **Upon.....poisoning**—i.e., the king's behaviour as soon as the poisoning was mentioned.

280. **Recorders**—Chappell, Popular Music of the Other Time, says, "Records and (English) Flutes are to outward appearance the same.....The number of holes for the fingers is the same, and the scale, the compass, and the manner of playing, the same", etc.

282. **Perdy**—F. par dieu. by God ; probably another quotation in which Hamlet alters the latter part of the second verse.

285. **A whole history**—not merely a word, but a whole history if you wish it.

288. **Is in.....distempered**—has become, since he retired from witnessing the play, terribly distracted.

290. **Choler**—wrath : literally bile, in which sense Hamlet pretends to take the word.

291-2. **Your wisdom.....doctor**—you would act more wisely to report this to his doctor.

292-3. **For me.....Choler**—if I were to administer his purge (purges being given for bilious disorders), I should only increase his choler : of course Hamlet's purgative would be a moral one, that of calling upon him to repent his crime.

294-5. **Put your.....affair**—be pleased to answer me in some coherent form ; some orderly shape.

296. **Tame**—ready to hear anything you have to say ; used with reference to Guildenstern's wildly.

300-1. **Nay.....breed**—nay, my good lord, the courtesy shown in the word (welcome) is not of the kind proper to the occasion. **Wholesome**—proper, reasonable.

302. **I will.....commandment**—I will give you the message sent by your mother.

302-3. **If not.....business**—if not, I will finish my business by asking your permission to leave you, and returning to my mistress.

306. **Make you.....answer**—give you a healthy answer ; Hamlet pretends to take Guildenstern's *Wholesome* in a literal sense and gives as his reason for not being able to return such an answer that his intellect is unsound.

307. **You shall command**—shall be at your service ; shall be rendered to you.

308-9. **Therefore.....matter**—therefore without further preface let us come to the business.

311. **Admiration**—wonder.

312. **O wonderful.....mother** !—what a wonderful son I must be if I can cause wonder in my mother.

313-4. **But.....admiration** ?—but is this all you have to tell me ? is there nothing else to follow after this expression of her wonder ? **Impart**—do not keep to yourself anything you have to tell.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE2025 Grant

317. **We shall.....mother**—further to bewilder Guildenstern. Hamlet in we affects the royal style, and speaks as though obedience to a mother was about the last thing that could be expected of a son, instead of its being an ordinary duty.

318. **Trade**—business ; another intentional affectation.

329. **So I do.....stealers**—so I do still, I swear by these hands ; said with grimirony. **Pickers and stealers**—a reference to the Church Catechism, one of the promises made in it by the catechumen being to keep his "hands from picking and stealing".

321-3. **You do.....friend**—by refusing to communicate your griefs to your friend, you do but decline to avail yourself of the means of escaping from them ; cp. Bacon, Essay of Friendship, "A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart.....You may take Sarza to open he liver ; steel to open the spleen...But no receipt openeth the heart. but a true friend ; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels and what soever lieth upon the heart, to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession."

324. **Advancement**—though Hamlet is not here speaking of his promotion to the crown, yet when Guildenstern takes him to be doing so, he keeps up the delusion.

325. **Voice**—recommendation.

326. **For**—in favour of, in behalf of.

327. **While.....grows**—Malone gives the remainder of the proverb from Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra, 1598, "oft sterves the silly steede", and adds, "Hamlet means that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death."

328. **Musty**—stale.

329. **To withdraw with you**—to step aside with you for a moment where we can be alone ; a parenthetic expression explanatory of his movement.

330-1. **Why do you.....toil** ?—why do you endeavour to entrap me into some indiscreet avowal ? A figure from stalking game, the object with the hunter being to get the animal to run with the wind so that it may not scent him or the snare set for it.

332-3. **If my duty.....unmannerly**—if in the execution of my duty I seem to go further than I ought, it is my love to you that makes me seem so rude ; or, perhaps, when the duty laid upon me is one that needs more audacity than I can boast, the love which bids me discharge it makes me clumsy in my eagerness.

334. **I do not.....that**—probably Hamlet, taking advantage of Guildenstern's enigmatical sentence, means that he is not so sure that he is speaking the truth.

340. **I knew.....it**—I am quite ignorant how to handle the instrument so as to produce any harmony out of it.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

341. **'Tis as easy as lying**—with the innuendo that Guildenstern found no difficulty in that act.

341-2. **Govern.....thumb**—apply your fingers and thumb to the stops to regulate the emission of sound.

343. **Discourse**—utter, give expression to.

345-6. **But these.....harmony**—but these stops I cannot so regulate as to make them give forth any harmonious sound ; the skill, the necessary knowledge.

347-8. **How unworthy.....me** !—How mean an opinion you must have of me !

348-9. **You would.....stons**—you assume, as it seems to me, to know how to extract utterance from me at your will.

350-1. **You would.....compass**—you fancy you can interpret my every thought ; a play upon the word *Sound* in the sense (1) to bring forth a sound, (2) to try the depth of water. **Compass**—the range of a musical instrument from its highest to its lowest note.

354. **Fret me**--annoy me.

357-8. **And presently**—and that too at once.

363. **Backed like a weasel**—shaped like the back of a weasel.

366. **Then.....by**—an intentionally inconsequent answer. **By and by**—at once.

367. **They fool.....bent**—they are ready to assent to anything I say, however foolish, in order to gain their purpose.

369. **By and by.....said**—that's not a very difficult undertaking.

371. **The very.....night**—the very time of night when witchery abounds, when as Macbeth says (Macb. ii. 1.51,2) "withcheraft celebrates pale Hecate's offerings."

372. **Yawn**—open wide, to allow the dead to walk.

373. **Contagion**—infections vapours.

374. **Such bitter business**—such deeds of better cruelty.

375. **Soft**—let me pause !

376. **Lose not thy nature**—do not forget your natural affection for your mother.

377. **Nero**—who murdered his mother in the most brutal manner. **This firm bosom**—this bosom of mine, fully determined though it is to punish the guilty.

379. **Speak daggers**—*i. e.*, words that will stab to the heart as keenly as daggers would piece the flesh ; (cp. M.A. ii. 1. 255). "She speaks poniards, and every word stabs", though thy are used in no very serious sense.

380. **My tongue.....hypocrities**—in this matter let my soul be a hypocrite to my tongue, i. e., though appearing to approve of my words not assent to my carrying them into action.

381-2. **How in.....consent** ?—however roughly I may take her to task, let me never yield to the impulse to ratify my words by

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

deeds, *i. e.*, the deed of murder. **Seals**—because the affixing of the seal was necessary to give validity to a document. **Shent**—from shend, to reprove, castigate with words. A good deal of indignation has been expressed at Hamlet's being made to contemplate even the possibility of punishing his mother by death. But though determined that king shall not escape his vengeance, and here indirectly dweling upon that determination. Hamlet seems to be referring to ghost's words in i.5.84-8, which even now that he feels sure of the mother's having been privy to the deed, at all events after it was done, he will implicitly obey, however violent his wreath against her. If the thought of such a possibility as killing his mother enters his head it is the ghost's question that has put it there.

ACT III

SCENE III

Summary of the Scene :

Claudius is now actively ready to paly the defensive as well as offensive role. Immediately he commissions Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to conduct Hamlet to England, with secret instructions to the King of England to execute Hamlet immediately he lands there.

However, he cannot command his conscience to rest in peace. He gives himself up to pious thoughts and kneels down to pray. But he cannot concentrate his thoughts on God's forgiveness. He is well aware of the heinous nature of his crime, though he knows that he cannot move Heaven for mercy so long as he continues to enjoy the fruits of his evil-doing. He does not doubt that the day will come when the judgement will be meted out to him ; but he clings too obstinately to what he holds for any genuine repentance. In other words, his conscience is not silent, but it is impotent, and so he can only take comfort in vague hopes of the future.

At this moment, when he is on his knees in prayer, Hamlet, going to meet the Queen, happens to pass unnoticed by his side. Instantly it occurs to Hamlet that it is the best opportunity to kill his enemy. The two deadly enemies are alone together as they have not been till now and never will be again. Hamlet's way lies open and justice can take its course. Hamlet draws his dagger and is ready to strike when another thought flashes across his mind. It is really the best opportunity to kill his enemy ? His heart says, "No !" Hemlet argues to himself that if he killed Claudius while he was praying to God, he would be sending his soul to Heaven and not to eternal hell as he meant to do. To send this murderer, therefore, to his death at a moment so propitious for the salvation of his soul is not punishment enough. But in this metaphysical argument Hamlet actually lets slip a very favourable opportunity of taking revenge upon Claudius. A moment later the king rises from his knees unconscious of how near he has been to death.

CC-0. Gandhi Memorial College Collection. Digitized by eGangotri Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Critical Comments :

The main purpose of this scene is to reveal further the characters of Claudius and Hamlet. Claudius is not a hardened sinner and murderer like Macbeth. His conscience is not quite dead. He is still capable of offering prayers to God and seeking his forgiveness. He is quite conscious of the enormity of his guilt, but having committed it and gained the fruits of his evil-doings, he must make further efforts, fair or foul, to make himself safe and secure.

Tho scene is also important for understanding of Hamlet's character. Several plausible explanations may be given for Hamlet's procrastination so far, but his refusal to act at this moment proves with certainty that his will of action is not like that of other men. This situation has another phase of consideration also. Schucking says : "If the superstition of Elizabethan times, which accorded an immense significance to conduct at the moment of death, be taken into account, there is no cause for seeing in his own explanation any subjective ground on the score of which Hamlet is merely excusing to himself his inability to act. It cannot be denied that Hamlet seems to us unbelievably inhuman when be rejects murder as not sufficient in itself. But it must not be forgotten that baroque exaggeration of the desire for vengenance had come to be a convention in the Elizabethan 'dreams of revenge'. Thus Hamlet is not intended to lose moral status by the savage instincts of which he has just given proof."

Notes :

1-2. **I like.....range**—I do not like the look of things as regards him, nor is it safe for us to allow his madness to have free scope. **His madness**—him who is mad.

3. **I your commission.....dispatch**—I will at once make out the commission which you are to take to England. It does not seem to follow at all necessarily that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are privy to the traitorous scheme for killing Hamlet in England. That he was to be got out of the way, they of course knew ; but the king would hardly be likely to confide to his agents what was to be done with him when thus out of the way.

4. **Shall along**—for the commission of the verb or motion.

5-7. **The terms.....lunacies**—the terms on which we hold away are not of so secure a nature that we can afford to look with unconcern upon the dangers which every moment spring from his mad freaks, and threaten as so nearly

Ourselves provide—supply ourselves with everything necessary for the voyage.

8-10. **Most holy.....majesty**—the anxiety you feel for the safety of those who are dependent upon you is a most holy feeling, their welfare being a sacred duty to one in your position.

11-3. **The single.....noyance**—even the individual man (who has no one to think of but himself) is in prudence bound to use every faculty of his mind to keep himself from injury.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Noyance—*i. e.*, annoyance, used for injury, danger.

14. **Spirit**—here little more than **life**—the vital principle.

15-6. **The cease.....alone**—the extinction of majesty in the death of a king is much more than the single death of an ordinary man.

16-7. **But like.....it**—involves the sweeping away of everything connected with it (sc. majesty), as a whirlpool enguifs everything that comes within its area.

18. **Highest mount**—*i. e.* from which, the fall will be most headlong.

20. **Mortise**—firmly fixed ; a mortise is the groove made in timber into which the tenon of another piece of timber is fixed.

20-2. **Which.....ruin**—and when this massive wheel is precipited down, everything however small, that is an adjunct of it, everything however trifling that accompanies it, is swept away in its violent overthrow.

23. **But with.....groan**—without that sigh being echoed by the groan of whole kingdom.

24. **Arm you**—prepare yourselves.

25-6. **For we.....free-toothed**—for I will put restraint upon this danger which now ranges abroad too freely.

28. **Behind.....myself**—I will betake myself to a place behind the tapestry ; that space between it and the wall being sometimes very considerable.

29. **To hear the process**—to hear how the interview proceeds ; **Tax**—a doublet of task.

30. **As you said**--"This was polonius's own suggestion, which, courtier-like, he ascribes to the king" (Moberly).

32. **Of vantage**--"from the vantage ground of concealment".

36-8. **O, my offence.....murder**--O, my crime, the murder of a brother, is so foul that the stain of it has reached the very heavens, on it rests the curse pronounced upon cain.

39, **Though.....will**--though my inclination and my will to do so equally spur me on. **Inclination**--the natural disposition to do a thing. **Will**—the determination prompted by the understanding.

40. **My stronger.....intent**—strong as my purpose is, my guilt is stronger still, and overcomes it.

41. **To double.....bound**—whose attention is engaged upon two matters of business which have nothing in common with each other.

42. **In pause**—hesitating.

43. **What if**—even supposing that.

45. **Sweet**—used here in the twofold sense of kind, gracious, and of purifying by means of rain.

46-7. **Whereto.....offence**—of what avail is merely except to overawe the face of crime so that it shrinks abashed out of sight ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by JKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

48-50. **And what's.........down** ? and what efficacy has prayer except the twofold purposes—one of arresting our fall, or of procuring pardon when we have fallen ? The original sense of **Porestall**—is, says Skeat, "to buy up goods before they had been displayed at a stall in the market" ; so to anticipate, and then to prevent.

50. **Serve my turn** ? be of service in my case ? a phrase very frequent in Shakespeare. **Turn**—being equivalent to occassion.

52. **Then I'll look up**—*i.e.*, with hopeful eyes ; take courage.

54. **Effects**—the advantages which he specifies in the next line.

55. **Ambition**—Delius explains this as the realization of ambition. It does not seem certain to me that the word, instead of being one of three "effects" is not in apposition with. **My crown**—*i.e.* my crown which was the very object of my ambition.

56. **May one......offence**—is it possible for one to be pardoned while still retaining that for which he sinned ?

57. **In the......world**—in the tainted streams of this world, *i.e.*, in the corrupted ways in which this world goes. Dyce and Furness adopt Walker's conjecture 'currents, *i. e.*, occurrents ; but it seems that there is a reference to a polluted stream, and the confusion of metaphors is not greater than others we have had.

58. **Offence's.........justice**—the wealthy offender is able to thrust justice aside.

59-60. **The wicked......law**—a favourable verdict is secured by the very wealth which has been wrongfully acquired.

61-2. **There.........nature**—before God's tribunal there is no evading justice, there the deed is seen in its real enormity. The Cl. Pr. Edd. say that Shakespeare here uses **Lies**—in its legal sense ; but though there is probably a play upon the word in that sense, it can scarcely be the only or even primary one—,

62-4. **And we...evidence**—and we cannot escape being brought face to face with our own sins to give evidence against them.

65. **Try**—let me try.

66. **Yet what......repent** ? yet of what avail is repentance when it consists in sorrow only without amendment of life ?

68-9. **O limed soul.........engaged** !—entangled in difficulties, and only more thoroughly entangled by your efforts to free yourself. The metaphor is from snaring a bird by means of bird-lime, a gl tinous substance which boys smear over a stick placed arcoss the nest, and by which the bird when alighting is held fast, its struggles to get free only causing it to smear itself with more of the bird lime.

69. **Make assay** ?—make vigorous effort to rescue me.

70. **Heart......steel**—naturally so unyielding.

73. **Now part**—I could not find a time more fit for my purpose.

74. **And so**—and the consequence will be that, etc.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

75. **That would be scann'd**—that point requires careful scrutinizing.

76. **For that**—in return for that.

79. **O, this.....salary**—such a deed as that would be something for which I might well ask payment, e.g. I should be doing him the greatest possible kindness, not punishing him, as I ought.

80. **He took.....bread**—he took my father by surprise when in a state of gross and luxurious living. Malone points out that. **Eull of bread**—is borrowed from Ezekiel, vi. 49, "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom pride fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness".

81. **With all.....may**—with all his sins in full blossom, and with his blood flowing in his veins with the lusty vigour of the sap of trees in mid-spring.

82. **And how.....heaven**—how his account in the next world stands none knows but God.

83-4. **But in our.....him**—but so far as we can judge by looking at the matter from all points of view, things are in an evil plight with him. **Our circumstance and course thought**—is equivalent to the circumstantial course of our thought, the course of our thought which goes round and round the subject and views it in all its particulars.

85. **To take.....soul**—in seizing the opportunity of killing him when he is purging his soul of guilt.

86. **Passage**—sc. from this world to the next.

88. **Up, sword**—return to your sheath ; suiting the action to the word. **And know.....hent**—and wait to seize a more terrible opportunity. **Hent**—is variously explained as grasp, opportunity, grip.

89. **Drunk asleep**—in a drunken sleep.

91. **At gaming**—engaged in gaming. **About**—occupied with.

92. **That has.....in it**—that unlike his present occupation, has nothing in it that savours of the salvation of his soul.

93. **Then trip.....heaven**—then give him such a fall that he will go headlong to hell.

95. **Stays**—is waiting for me.

96. **This physic.....days**—"Hamlet calls his temporary for bearance a physic which does not impart life to his foe, but prolongs his illness" (Delius).

98. **Words.....go**—mere words of prayer, into which heart-felt penitence does not enter, never reach the thone of God.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ACT III

SCENE IV

Summary of the Scene :

In this momentous scene Hamlet meets the Queen and freely pours all the rancour of his heart upon her. According to the pre-arranged plan, Polonius hides himself behind the arras in the same room to overhear the dialogue between the son and the mother and report the whole talk to the king.

Hamlet was already charged with insuppresssible rancour and indignation and therefore a little provocation was needed to ignite his fury. As soon as Hamlet appeared before the Queen, she reprimanded him for so rudely offending his stepfather (Claudius). This little cue was sufficient to inflame Hamlet. He told his mother that it was rather she who really offended his father by being instrumental in his murder and later marrying the murderer himself. The Queen, surprised and indignant, feels that her maternal dignity has been assaulted. She tries to leave the room, with threat that she would send those who would be able to manage him better. But Hamlet rushes at her in his fury, and roughly thrusts her into a chair, so that she gives out a cry for help. Polonius moves behind the arras and he also cries for help. At this Hamlet thrusts his sword through the arras and kills Polonius. Hamlet does not know whom he has killed. Instantly it occurs to him that his victim may be the king himself. Removing the arras he discovers that it was Polonius. Hamlet indignantly says that Polonius rightly met his death for foolishly intermeddling with others' affairs.

With redoubled rancour Hamlet again turns to his mother and rails at her for her lack of taste and judgment in choosing Claudius as her second husband. Claudius who is like a mildew'd ear blasting his wholesome brother. And having long passed the hey-day of youth, she has not even the excuse of lust. He pointedly tells her that she has committed the deadly sin of incest by marrying her husband's brother. He takes it upon himself to play the role of her judge, and upbraids her like an indignant preacher calling a hearden-ed sinner to repentance. He castigates her unmercifully and humuli-ates her by holding up her actions to shame, showing her how des-picable are those instincts which govern her. She is deeply shaken morally and feels her guilt. In deep agony she stops her ears with her fingers and implores him to spare her. But Hamlet's overwhel-ming rage is like a storm that must blow itself out ; nothing can stop him.

At this moment, however, most unexpected help is offered her in her extremity ; the ghost of the dead father appears to Hamlet. The awe-inspiring effect of this sudden visitation momentarily stems the torrent of Hamlet's wrath. All his thoughts are immediately centred on his father's spirit, he stares at it aghast, for its return must surely mean that he has been remiss in his duty. But the ghost

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

is not simply concerned with revenge : it has come to pacify Hamlet and to counsel him to be gentle toward his mother. The Queen, who cannot see the apparition, does not know whom her son is addressing, and thinks he must be out of his mind. But Hamlet hastily assures her, anxious to leave her no excuse for treating his words as the fumes of a madman, that he is but mad in craft. He ordains her to repent and never to share her bed with Claudius.

In the end, Hamlet tells the Queen that the king has commissioned Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to conduct him to England the next day. Then dragging the dead body of Polonius, Hamlet leaves the Queen's chamber.

Critical Comments :

Schucking believes that this is one of the most thrilling and passionate scenes in the play. Commenting upon this scene he says that although this scene brings us no nearer to a full understanding of the plot itself, it throws much additional light upon the character of Hamlet. Nowhere more vividly than here does his typically self-absorbed attitude, and his lack of interest in what passes in the soul of another come out so clearly. In his opinion, the Queen has forfeited all her rights and prerogatives as a mother. Hamlet's readiness to set himself up as an arbiter of morals seems to us to come into conflict with that respect a son should show his parents. But the attitude of the Elizabethans in such matters differed considerably from ours.

This scene is also an incomparable study of passion, particularly at the moment of Polonius's death. When Hamlet hears the voice from behind the arras we see in him all the complicated reaction of a neurotic, most of which take place beneath the threshold of consciousness ; rage at the eavesdropper, mingled scorn and triumph are seized and rendered by Shakespeare, credibly and naturally in lesss than a dozen syllables. Never has so much been said in so few words !

Furthermore, Hamlet's efforts to appeal to the better nature of a woman whom be believes so sunk in moral apathy that she cannot discriminate between what is noble and what is base, is undertaken with that intensity of which only Shakespearean characters are capable. The guilt of the sinner is so appalling that loyalty and faith are destroyed and the very light of heaven obscured. The love bond between the Queen and Claudius is a filthy abomination ; and in Hamlet's own appeal to his mother's conscience virtue kneels to vice and humbly begs leave to be charitable.

Notes :

1. **Straight**—straightway, immediately. **Look.....him**—he sure you drive your blows home, i. e. press him with your questions so that he cannot escape answering definitely.

2. **Pranks**—freaks of madness. **Have been.....with**—have gone too great a length to be endured any longer.

CC-BY. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

 Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

3-4. **Hath screen'd.....him**—have interposed to shield him from much wratch which would otherwise have fallen upon him.

4. **Sconce me**—hide myself.

5. **He round with him**—use the plainest language possible to him.

6. **I'll warrant you**—I promise you that I will.

7. **Fear me not**—do not doubt my pressing him hard.

11. **You answer.....tongue**—your answer is mere frivolity.

14. **Rood**—cross, i.e., of Christ: "it would appear that, at least in earlier times, the rood signified not merely the cross, but the image of Christ upon the cross" (*Dyce*).

16. **Would.....so'**—alas !

17. **Nay, then.....speak**—if you are going to answer me in such a strain as this, I will set those to talk to you who will force you to use very different language.

18. **Budge**—stir, move a step.

19-20. **You go not.....you**—you will not be allowed to move from this spot till, as in a mirror, I have shown you your real nature.

23. **A rat**—Collier points out that in Shirley's Traitor, 1635 Depazzi says of a secreted listener, "I'll wager a ducat I have killed him.

32. **Thy better**—i.e in rank, sc. the king. **Take thy fortune**—take the fate which has befallen you owing to your thrusting-yourself in where you were not wanted.

33. **Is some danger**—is a dangerous kind of business.

34. **Leave.....hands**—it is no good your making all this out ward show of grief.

35-6. **And let me.....stuff**—is your heart that should be wrong, and that I mean to do, if it is not impenetrably callous.

37-8. **If demand.....sense**—if accursed familiarity with crime has not so brazened it as to be proof against all feeling.

39. **Wag thy tongue**—use your tongue so freely.

40-1. **Such an act.....modesty**—you have committed a deed of a nature that dims the grace of all modest blushess : the modesty of all your sex is robbed of much of its grace by the fact of a women having done such a deed.

42. **Calls virtue hypocrite**—makes all real virtue seem mere hypocrisy.

42-5. **Takes off.....there**—and in place of the tenderness that graces an innocent love, sets upon its essential grace :

Contraction—for marriage contract, is not found elsewhere.

48. **A rhapsody of words**—a more extravagent utterance of words without meaning.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

49-51. **Yea.....act**—yea, even this solid earth, with gloom-struck face, as though expectant of the day of judgment, is sick at heart in beholding such a deed.

51-2. **What act.....index** ?—what act of mine is it that has so stormy a prelude ?

53. **This picture.....this**—there is much discussion here as to whether any pictures are really shown, if so whether they are pictures hanging on the wall, or ministures produced for the occasion, one, of his father, possibly hanging round Hamlet's neck, the other, of the king, round that of the queen.

54. **Hyperion's curls**—on some ancient coins the sun-god is represented with an abundance of curls in imitation of the lambent rays on the circumference of the sun's disc. **Front**—brow.

56. **Counterfeit presentment**—exact resemblance.

57. **To threaten**—expressive of threatening ; awe-striking.

58. **Station**—posture. **Herald**—mercury being the messenger of the gods.

59. **Heaven-kissing**—reaching almost to heaven.

60. **Combination**—of excellences.

61-2. **Where every.....seal**—which bore the impression of the hand of all the gods, set there in attestation of his nobility.

64-5. **Like.....brother**—infecting and so destroying his brother as a mildewed ear of corn by its neighbourhood to a healthy ear infects and blights it.

66. **Leave to feed**—cease to draw your nourishment from ; desert his support.

67. **Batten**—grow fat.

68. **You.....love**—you cannot say that you were led astray by ardent love.

69. **The hey-day.....humble**—passion no longer overleaps its bounds, but has become dulled and well under control. **Hey-day**—properly an interjection of surprise or exultation.

70. **Waits upon**—waits for the direction of.

71. **Step**—transfer itself, pass ; with the idea of passing from what is good to what is bad. **Sure**—certainly.

72. **Motion**—"impulse of desire" (Staunton).

73. **Apoplex'd**—suddenly deprived of its functions ; as the body is by a stroke of apoplexy.

73-6. **For madness.....difference**—for even madness would make such a mistake, nor sense ever allow itself to become so entirely the slave of passionate feeling as to leave itself no power of choice by which to help itself in deciding between two objects so different from each other (and one so inferior to the other).

77. **Cozen'd**—cheated. **Hoodman blind**—what we now call 'blindman's buff', a game among children in which one of them has his eyes 'hooded', or blinded with a handkerchief, and is set to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

catch and name one of his companions, a fore feit being paid if he names the wrong one.

78-81. **Eyes.....mope**—eyes without the help of touch to guide them, touch without the help of sight, etc.. or even a small portion, and that a diseased portion, of a single healthy sense, would not show itself so dull and stupid. **Mope**—"the same word as mop, to grimace.

82-5. **Rebellious.....fire**—if hellish passion can burst out into such uncontrolled mutiny in a woman of her age, virtue in the case of ardent youth may well show itself as soft as wax and melt in the fire of mutiny.

85-8. **Proclaims.....will**—virtue (in the case of young men) need not protest any indignation when the strength of passion gives the signal for action, since here we have proof that aged blood, which should be cold as ice, burns as fiercely as that which runs in the veins of youth, and that reason which should restrain impulse only acts as a go between to it and its object.

89. **Into.....soul**—so that I am forced to look into the very depths of my soul.

90. **grained**—dyed so deeply and permanently.

91. **As will.....tinct**—that nothing can wash them out. **Leave**—"part with give up", resign.

94. **That is.....tithe**—literally who is not the twentieth part of the tenth part, *i.e.*, who weighs nothing as against, etc.

95. **A vice of kings**—who is to a real king nothing more than the buffoon in the old Moralities was to the serious characters Douce shows that the 'Vice' in those old plays was so named from the vicious qualities attributed to him, and from the mischievous nature of his general conduct.

96. **A cutpurse.....rule**—one who has filehed the empire and its sway as a common pick—pocket filches his stolen goods. Purses were in Shakespeare's day worn hanging at the girdle, and so were easily cut off by thieves.

99. **A king.....patches**—a king with nothing kingly about him made up of nothing but the cast-off remnants of kingly dignity.

101. **What would.....figure** ? what would you desire appearing thus ?

103. **Do you.....chide**—you surely must have come to chide, etc.

104-5. **That lapsed.....command** ?—who having allowed the time to pass in inactivity and passionate regrets, has failed to carry out your dread command, a matter of such pressing importance.

109. **Amazement.....sits**—utter bewilderment has settled down upon your mother ; has taken entire possession of her.

110. **Step.....Soul**—interpose to save her from being over-powered by the emotions now struggling in her heart.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by 1KS-MoE-2025-Grant

111. **Conceit.....works**—imagination works most powerfully in those who, like women, are physically weakest.

113-4. **Alas.....vacancy**—alas, it is not you who should ask how I am, but I who should ask how you are, what has come over you, that you look so fixedly upon mere empty space.

115. **Incorporal**—incorporeal, immaterial.

115. **Forth.....peep**—from your eyes your soul looks out in wild amazement.

117-9. **And.....end**—and like soldiers awakened by the signal of the enemy being at hand, your hair, a moment ago lying still upon your head, starts up and stands erect, like inanimate matter suddenly endowed with life. **The.....soldiers**—here he defines the situation of soldiers in particular circumstances; **Alarm**—a cry to arms, from Ital, all arme, to arms! **excrements**—anything that grows out from the body, such as hair, nails.

122. **How pale he glares**—how pale he looks as he glares upon us.

123-4. **His form.....capable**—his appearance, coupled with the reason of that appearance, if appealing to the very stones, would stir them to feeling. **Capable**—susceptible, receptive.

125-6. **Convert.....effects**—turn my action from its proper sternness to pity.

126-7. **Then what.....colour**—then the vengeance which I have to take will lack that justification which it would otherwise have.

127. **Tears.....blood**—and instead of shedding the blood of the murderer, I shall perhaps only shed tears of pity from my own eyes.

129. **Is**—exists, is not "a alse creation proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain."

131. **Steals away**—gradually vanishes.

132. **In his.....lived**—in the very dress he wore when alive.

135-6. **This bodiless.....in**—madness is very skilful in giving birth to such illusions of the sight.

137-9. **Doth.....music**—beats with as regular and healthy a rhythm as yours; its pulsations are as indicative of a sound frame of mind as yours.

130. **Re-word**—repeat word for word.

140-1. **Which madness.....from**—whereas a madman would wander in fantastic fashion from the subject.

141. **For love of grace**—as you hope for pardon. **Grace**—the grace of God.

142-3. **Lay not.....speaks**—do not try to soothe your soul by imagining to yourself that it is not your sin but my madness which calls aloud in this way.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

144-6. **It will**.....**unseen**—to do so will, instead of healing the sore, only cover it as with a film, while rank corruption, eating into the core of your soul poisons it unnoticed ; the open sore may be treated, the sore skinned over will prevent the progress of the disease from being seen, though it is going on all the time and can only end in death.

147. **Avoid**.....**come**—aviod sin in the future.

148-9. **And do not**.....**ranker**—and do not make what is already so foul still fouler by self-deception and hipocrisy. **Compost**—mixture, composition, manure.

149. **Forgive**.....**virtue**—forgive me for this virtuous in dignation.

150. **For in**.....**times**—for in these times of gross and pampered indulgence. **Pursy**—literally short-winded, here short-winded from over-indulgence.

152. **Curb**—"bend and trackle".

155. **The purer**—all the purer ; but so much the purer.

157. **Assume**.....**not**—act as though you were virtuous, even if you have not the feeling.

158-9. **That monster**.....**this**—"that monster, Custom, who destroys all natural feeling and prevents it from being exerted and is the malignant attendant on habits, is yet angel in this respect, etc.

160-2. **That**.....**put on**—that, to accustom us to the practice of good actions, he, besides what else he does, furnishes us with the garb of virtue which we can easily put on, if we so desire.

164-5. **And either**.....**potency**—and either completely overcome the devil, or at least expel him from our nature with irresistible force.

166-7. **And when**.....**you**—and when you crave for a blessing from heaven, thus showing your contrition, I will ask of you a mother's blessing. **For**—as regards.

168-70. **But heaven**.....**minister**—but heaven has pleased that it should be so, viz., that I should be its instrument of vengeance in order that I might be punished by being guilty of this man's death, and this man be punished by my act.

171. **Bestow him**—get rid of his deal body. **Answer well**—justify myself ; render a good account of my act in killing him.

173. **I must**.....**kind**—I must be cruel in words only to be king in reality, i. e., my reproaches are necessary to make you see your conduct in its right light, and so bring you to a better manner of life.

174. **Thus bad**.....**behind**—thus my harsh words must be followed by ever harsher measures, sc. the punishment of the king.

176. **Not this**.....**do**—do anything in the world except this that I bid you do.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

177. **Bloat**—bloated by excess, especially in drinking.

178. **Pinch**.....**check**—make you wanton with his caresses. **Mouse**—a term of endearment common in Shakespeare's day.

179-81. **Make you**.....**craft**—make you confess that I am not mad in reality, but only pretend to be so in order to effect my objects. **Ravel**.....**out**—unravel ; used of the gradual process of extracting Hamlet's secret, disentangling, as it were, the knotted string.

182-4. **For who**.....**hide** ? for who but one that has everything that can ennoble a woman-rank, beauty, virtue, wisdom-would think of hiding a secret of such vital importance from a filthy creature like your husband. **Paddock**—toad. **Gib**—more commonly gib-cat, a male cat.

185. **No, in despite**.....**secrecy**—no, in spite of the secrecy which common sense would bid you maintain.

188. **To try conclusions**—to make experiments.

189. **Break**.....**down**—break your neck by falling headlong in your effort to fly like a bird. The anecdote in question has never been discovered, but "the reference", as the Cl. Pr. Edd point out, "must be to some fable in which an ape opened a basket containing live birds, then crept into it himself, and 'to try conclusions', whether he could fly like them, jumped out and broke his neck."

190-2. **Be thou**.....**me**—rest assured that if words are made of breath, and breath is made of life, it is not in me to breath your secret to any one.

193. **I must to England**—we are not informed how Hamlet became aware of this, unless he overheard the king's conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

194. **Concluded**—determined.

196. **As**—just as much, i. e., no more. **Fang'd**—with their fangs still in them ; of course the poison is not in the fang itself, but in the poison-bag at the back of it.

197-98. **They must**.....**knavery**—it is for them to make the path smooth for me, and to lead me where the villanous scheme of the king may be put into execution. **Let it work**—let the scheme go on.

199-200. **For 'tis**.....**petar**—for it is the finest soprt in the world to see the engineer blown into the air by his own engine of destruction. **Peater**—a war engine filled with explosive materials.

200-2. **And 't shall**.....**moon**—and it will be strange if I do not manage to drive my mine beneath theirs and blow them high into the air. **I shall go hard**—i. e., the difficulty must be a great one if I do not manage to overcome it. Mines in besieging a fortress, etc., are made useless by running a counter mine at a short depth below or directly opposite them, placing some high explosive at a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

suitable point and firing it when it will cause most damage to the enemy's mine and the men working in it.

203. **When.....meet**—when two skilful design come into direct opposition : the figure of the counter mine is still kept up.

204. **Set me packing**—hurry me off about my business ; in. **Packing**—there is perhaps the idea of contriving which is often found in Shakespeare, though here it does not seem to be the primary one.

205. **Lug.....guts**—both words used in a contemptous way though guts had not the vulgar sense which it has since acquired. **Neighbour**—used as an adjective.

208. **Prating**—chattering, fond of idle talk.

209. **To draw.....you**—that I may have done with you ; that I may put the finishing touch to this business.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Summary of the Scene :

The action of this scene follows immediately upon the preceding one. The Queen hastens to the King to apprise him with what had happened in the course of her interview with Hamlet. Defending him as much as possible, she tells the King that Hamlet is "mad as the sea and wind." It is in this fit of madness, she tells the King, that Hamlet thrust his rapier through the arras and killed Polonius. The King hears of the death of Polonius with great alarm and says that if he had been there in place of Polonius, he would himself have been killed. He is deeply concerned at the thought of the danger that he himself has escaped, and troubled by the difficulties to which Hamlet's mad act must give rise. He is also angered that, owing to a certain tolerance on account of family ties, he has borne him so long that things have come to this pass. He is not prepared to bear with him any longer and therefore decides to send him to England early next morning. But his immediate concern is to discover where Hamlet has hidden the body of Polonius. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent to extract this information from the Prince.

Critical Comments :

This small scene is only a continuation of the preceding scene. Its only purpose is to pave the way to the King to take any defensive or offensive steps he may choose to take. It is only a link in the development of the plot.

Notes :

1. **Matter**—something of importance, something material.

Profound—drawn from the depths of your heart, and so deep in significance.

CC-0 Agamnigam Research Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

2. **Translate**—explain the meaning of. **'Tis fit**—it is only right.

3. **Bestow.....while**—be good enough to leave us alone for a short time.

6. **How does Hamlet** ? What is the state of Hamlet's mind !

8. **Which**—as to which ; on the question which.

10. **Whips on**—he hastily draws. **For**—the ellipsis of the nominative.

11. **Brainish apprehension**—mad-brained fancy.

13. **It had.....there**—I myself should have fared as Polonius has, if I had been in his place. The king's first thought is a selfish one.

14. **His liberty**—the fact of his being allowed to go at large **Threat**—risk, danger.

16. **How shall.....answer'd**—what excuse shall we be able to make for ourselves in regard to this deed ?

17-0. **It will...man**—the blame of this deed will be laid upon us for not having used the precaution of keeping this madman under restraint where he could not have come in contact with any one. **Short**—"opposed to loose".

20. **We.....understand**—we deliberately refused to perceive. We purposely shut our eyes to ; the king cannot help being a hypocrite even in himself and his queen.

21. **Owner**—one subject to.

22. **To keep.....divulging**—rather than let it be known.

23. **Pith of life**—the vital parts.

24. **To draw apart**—to put out of the way so that no harm may come to it.

25-7. **O'er whom.....done**—over which he shed tears of repentance, his very madness showing in this a touch of soundness, like the midst of mines of base metal. **Ore**—probably used for the finest of ores. **Gold mineral**—mine.

29. **Shall.....touch**—gild the mountains with its first rays.

30. **But**—than.

31-1. **We must.....excuse**—we must use all our authority as king to put a good face upon, and all our skill in special pleading to excuse the deed.

34. **Join you.....aid**—take others to help you.

36. **Speak fair**—use gentle language to him.

38. **Call up**—summon to our assistance.

40. **So, haply, slander**—in that way if we take those measures perhaps slander.

41-4. **Whose whisper.....air**—whose poisonous whisper flies from end to end of the world as unerringly and as fatally as the cannonball to its mark, may pass by us and only hit the air which feels no wound. **Blank**—the white disc now the gold in a target.

CC-0 Panjab University. Digitized by eGangotri Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

45. **Discord**—in not knowing what course to take, one moment suggesting one, another moment suggesting another. **Dismay**—in anticipating what others may do in consequences of Polonious's death.

ACT IV

SCENE II

Summary of the Scene :

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern now meet Hamlet and try to know from him where he has hidden the body of Polonius. But they no more succeed in their mission now than they did earlier in extracting the secrets of his abnormal behaviour. They are only forced to listen to Hamlet's contemptuous jibes, and allow themselves to be hoaxed by baffling indications. He gives them an obscure hint that once they cease to be of any use to the king, they will be discarded. Finally, Hamlet himself suggests to them to take him to the king.

Critical comments :

This scene once again proves that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are no match to Hamlet in intelligence or even in cleverness. This suggests that the king's project of sending Hamlet to England under their escort is also likely to miscarry. This is exactly what comes out in the end.

Notes :

1. **Stowed**—put away.

6. **Compounded.....kin**—mixed with the earth of which it was originally formed.

11. **Keep your counsel**—keep your secret ; referring perhaps to his discovery, in ii. 2. 284, 5, that they had been sent to sound him.

12. **Besides.....sponge** !—besides, to think of my being questioned by a fellow like you, who would get everything out of me, suck me dry, with the same insidiousness that a sponge sucks up water

12-3 **What.....King** ?—what sort of answer do you expect to receive from one, like me, of royal birth ; do you expect that such a one would submit to be sucked dry by a fellow like you ? Rusuton says that **Replication** is "an exception of the second degree made by the plaintiff upon the answer of a defendant."

15. **Countenance**—favour.

16. **Authorities**—the several attributes of power.

17. **Like an.....nuts**—as an ape does nuts.

18. **Mouthed**—taken into his mouth.

19. **Gleaned**—picked up in the way of formation. **It is but squeezing you**—all he needs to do is to squeeze you like a sponge.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by MoE-IKS-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

22. **A knavish.....ear**—I am glad you should not understand it, as that shows you are only a fool, fools never seeing the point of knavish words.

26-7. **The body.....thing**—various subtle meanings have been read into these words, but they were probably used for no other purpose than that of mystifying Guildenstern and commentators.

28-9. **Hide fox, and all after**—an allusion to the game of hide and seek, in which one of the players, called the fox, hides and all rest have to go after him and find out his hiding place. Here, of course, merely a continuation of Hamlet's feigned madness.

ACT IV

SCENE III

Summary of the Scene :

Hamlet is now brought to the presence of the king. The king straightway asks him where he has hidden the body of Polonius. Hamlet continues to feign madness and gives evasive and ironical replies. On being asked where was Polonius, Hamlet replies that he may be in heaven and the king might send some one to find him out there. If he is not in heaven, the king may himself go to hell to seek him there. If he is not found in either of these places, he may be found in the hollow of the staircase. This is an indirect hint to the place where he has hidden the dead body.

The king then pretends great anxiety about the honour and security of Hamlet. He informs Hamlet that for the sake of his own safety and security he is sending him to England next morning under the escort of his loving friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet lets it out that he can guess at the true purpose behind the king's plan but accepts the suggestion and bids farewell to the mother. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern follow him on his heels.

In a soliloquy immediately following this action, the king reveals his secret plan in sending Hamlet to England. In a sealed letter addressed to the king of England, Claudius has instructed the British king to execute Hamlet without any questioning as soon as he lends there.

Critical Comments :

The doclie and impotent manner in which Hamlet surrenders himself to Claudius after the murder of Polonius has led to great comments regarding the mental and emotional stability of Hamlet. The ignominious contest over the remains of Polonius shows a definite deterioration in Hamlet's mental condition. The almost hysterical spite of his replies to his courteous questioners, and the way in which he feels free to annoy and insult them, clearly shows him to be in an unbalanced state of mind. The thought of the decomposing body of Polonius provides him with a congenial subject on which to discourse. With a morbid delight, typical of the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

melancholic, he dwells on the fate of mankind, that is of being eaten by worms, and revels in the thought that he, too, must share in this eternal cycle affecting all matter. It is in this spirit that he takes the verdict of his banishment from Denmark. It seems indeed that he is ready to be led like a lamb to the slaughter. During this night he has fallen from the highest pitch of passionate excitement to the depths of apathy.

Notes :

1. **Him**—Hamlet.
2. **Goes loose**—is allowed his freedom.
3. **Yet must.....him**—yet it will not do for me to employ the full force of the law against him, take such extreme measures as the law would allow.
4. **Of**—by. **Distracted**—weak-brained.
5. **Who like.....eyes**—whose liking depends not upon the use of their judgement, but, etc.
6. **The offender's scourge**—the provocation the offender has received ; that by which he has been lashed into furious deeds.

7-9. **To bear.....pause**—in order that things may go smoothly, not excite opposition, this sending him away so suddenly must be, made to seem the result of deliberate calculation.

14. **Without**—outside. **Guarded.....pleasure**—under a guard till it be known what it is your pleasure should be done.

20-1. **A certain—him**—a certain assemblage of discriminating worms, worms that know what they like, are even now engaged upon him ; an allusion to the Diet of Worms.

21-2. **Your worm.....diet**—the worm you and I know so well is the only real emperor as regards diet.

24-5. **But.....table**—to dishes served in a different way but placed before the same company. **The end**—what it all comes to.

30. **Go a progress**—an allusion to the royal 'progress', journeys of state, so common in England in former days.

33. **Send thither to see**—Delius points out that the king would not be able himself to get to heaven to make the inquiry.

34. **The other place**—hell.

35. **Nose**—smell.

38. **He will.....come**—you need not be afraid of his running away, he's fast enough there.

40. **Tender**—hold precious.

41. **Must.....hence**—will render it necessary for you to leave Denmark. The king pretends that it is no wish of his, but a necessary consequence of the deed, as though Hamlet would be seized by the very multitude who he had just before said loved him too much to allow any harm to be done to him.

42. **With fiery quickness**—"with hot haste".

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

43. **The wind at help**—the favourable wind.

44. **The associates tend**—the companions I have chosen for your voyage are in readiness for you. **Bent**—directed, in trim.

45. **For England** !—in order that he may not be suspected of having made any plans of his own to baffle the king's design, Hamlet pretends to be surprised at the information.

46. **So it is.....purposes**—it is well, as you would allow if you knew, etc.

53. **At foot**—at his heels, closely. **Tempt.....aboard**—persuade him to go on board as quickly as you can.

54. **I'll have him hence**—I am determined that he shall sail.

55-6. **For every.....affair**—for every else that depends upon the management of this business is thoroughly complete.

57. **If my love.....aught**—if you in the least value my love.

58. **As my.....sense**—and greatness of my power may well teach you to do so.

59-60. **Free awe**—"awe still felt though no longer enforced by the presence of Danish armies" (Cl. Pr. Edd.)

60. **Since yet.....sword**—since the chestisement you received at our hands is still fresh in your memory.

Cicatrice—scar.

61. **Homage**—*i. e.*, the homage of being ready to carry not our injunctions.

61-2. **Thou mayst.....process**—you may not treat with indifference our royal mandate.

62-4. **Which imports.....Hamlet**—the full tenour of which as explained by letters sent with it, and enforcing it with adjurations of the same purport, is that Hamlet should at once be put to death.

65. **For like.....rages**—for the effect which his existence has upon me is like that of a hectic fever on the blood, *i. e.*, causing it to burn violently. **Hectic**—property an adjective—continual, habitual, and especially applied of old to reserves ; now used only on the sense of consumptive, as 'a hectic cough', 'a hectic colour of the face'.

66. **And thou.....me**—and to you I must look for a cure for this disease of mine.

67. **Howe'er.....begun**—whatever may happen to me, I can never feel that the happiness I long for has begun.

ACT IV

SCENE IV

Summary of the Scene :

Hamlet now sets forth to take ship for England ; but on his way he has one last encounter of a certain importance. The forces

CC-0 Agamdeep Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of the Norwegian Fortinbras, about to conduct a campaign against Poland, have obtained permission to march through Denmark, and Hamlet falls in with them. He enquires the cause of this war and is told that honour is its principal motive, for the stretch of land on which so much is being staked, is of little consequence. This moves Hamlet deeply and gives him much matter for self-reproach for he at once compares the action of Fortinbras with his own. He does not make any effort to justify his own conduct, but he is eager to find out the reason for it.

This situation once again throws Hamlet in a long but important soliloquy. He sinks into an impassioned fit of self-analysis and self-reproach. Is he merely swayed by the instinct for such physical necessities as food and sleep ? Or, is he deluding himself into mistaking for caution what is, in reality, cowardice ? What a contrary lesson is offered by Fortinbras who would stake anything for the vindication of his honour. His cause for revenge is far more strong than that of Fortinbras. His father has been murdered and his mother stained and yet his blood is cool. Therefore once again he resolves that henceforth his "thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth !"

Critical Comments :

The importance of this scene lies in its long soliloquy. This soliloquy springs from one of Hamlet's characteristic weaknesses. The example of a better or stronger man always lands him to despise himself. This speech, however, from the point of view of the action is not needed at all. The Prince has let slip many favourable occasions of revenge and therefore his resolution to be bloody henceforth seems to be the fumes of impotency. This attempt to spur himself on out of regard for honour after he has failed to be moved by far more potent reasons is somewhat weak in effect, despite the great beauty and hyperbolic richness of the language. On the whole the speech contributes nothing towards any increase in the general dramatic tension.

Notes :

1. **From me greet**—bear my greetings to.
2. **By his licence**—if he will allow it.

3-4. **Craves.....kingdom**—desires that, according to promise, he may be allowed to transport his forces across Denmark. **The rendezvous**—the appointed place of meeting.

5. **Would.....us**—wishes to see us for any purpose.

6. **We shall.....eye**—we shall be ready to appear before him in person and do homage to him.

7. **And let him know so**—and therefore, tell him so.
8. **Softly**—slowly ; *i. e.*, with the troops under your command.
9. **Powers**—forces ; as frequenty in Shakespeare.
10. **Of Norway**—belonging to Norway.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

11. **How purposed**—with what object have they marched hither.

16-6. **Goes it.....frontier** ?—is the expedition directed against the main land of Poland, or only some outlying portion of that kingdom ?

17. **With no addition**—without exaggeration.

18. **To gain**—to make ourselves masters of.

19. **That hath.....name**—whose only value lies in the name of possession.

20. **To pay.....it**—I would not pay five ducats, not even five, for the lease of it.

21. **Norway**—the king of Norway.

22. **Ranker**—higher ; literally more exuberant in growth ; **Sold in fee**—sold out and out, not merely farmed : a 'fee' originally signified an estate feudally held of another person, and an estate in fee simple is the greatest estate or interest which the law of England allows any person to possess in landed property.

23. **Then**—if it is worth no more than that.

25-6. **Two thousand.....straw**—the decision of this petty quarrel will cost the lives of least two thousand men, and the waste of etc. **Debate**—decide by combat.

27-9. **This is .....dies**—this morbid desire in the body politic to quarrel about nothing, a desire due to superabundance of wealth and the idleness of long peace, is like an abscess in the physical body which bursts inwardly without showing any visible cause of the man's ; *i. e.*, this readiness to quarrel merely for the sake of quarrelling shows an unhealthy condition in a state.

30. **God.....you**—merely a courteous form of bidding farewell.

32. **How all.....me**—how everything that happens seems to denounce my irresolution ? charge against me as informers do against guilty persons.

35. **Market of his time**—that for which he brings his time for sale as beasts are brought on market day.

35. **A beast, no more**—thus marking himself no better than a brute beast.

36-7. **Made us.....after**—endowed us with such comprehensive faculties, faculties which concern themselves with both the future and the past ; not like those of brute beasts which seem concerned with the present moment only.

39. **To fust**—to grow fusty, mouldy ; literally 'tasting' of the cask.

40. **Craven**—cowardly ; literally one who sues for mercy.

41. **Of thinking**—which consists in thinking. **Precisely**—minutely.

42-3. **A thought.....coward**—a mode of thinking which, if quartered, will be found to be made up on part of wisdom to three parts of cowardice.

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

44. **'This.....do'**—this act still remains to be done.

46. **Examples.....me**—so plain and material that dullest man could not fail to recognize them as such.

47. **Witness**—for instance ; literally 'let this army witness'. **Charge**—cost.

48. **Delicate and tender**—brought up in ease and luxury, and so not naturally inclined to such rough work.

50. **Makes.....event**—laughs at the possible consequences.

51. **Mortal**—liable to death.

53. **An egg-shell**—the merest, most worthless, trifle.

54. **Is no to stir**—furness thinks that the negative belongs to the copula, and that there should be a comma after not. **Argument**—cause of quarrel.

55. **But greatly.....Straw**—but to be prompt to find in the slightest trifle provocation for fighting.

56. **When.....stake**—when honour is concerned ; when it is honour that is the subject of attack ; cp. T. N. ii. I. 129 "Have you not set mine honour at the stake And baited it with all unmuzzled thoughts..."

56-9. **How stand.....sleep** ? how unworthy is my position, then, who though my father has been murdered and my mother's good fame destroyed,—facts which should be sufficient to stir both my reason and my passion,—still allow things to remain exactly at they were without making the smallest effort to remedy them.

61. **For a.....fame**—for the sake of such a fanciful whim as the desire of fame ; Schmidt takes trick as trifle.

62. **Like beds**—as readily as they would to their beds. **Plot**—small strip of land.

63. **Whereon.....cause**—too small to hold the combatants for it.

64. **Which is.....continent**—which is not large enough to be the tomb and cover. **Continent**—which contains.

ACT IV

SCENE V

Summary of the Scene :

The death of Polonius has turned the wits of Ophelia and incenced Laertes to launch a rebellion against Claudius. Clouds of doom and disaster gather fast in the horizon of the country. The Queen labours hard under the oppressive feeling of guilt. Ophelia's grief at the death of her father has turned her completely mad. In this scene Ophelia makes her way singing to the Queen's chamber with wild gestures and disordered hair. She sings pieces and fragments of old ditties and elegies and scatters flowers as if offering them on the grave of her father. Through all her random talk and songs there runs a note of inconsolate grief at the sudden death of her father. The king is also visibly moved by the unbearable grief

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of Ophelia. He asks Horatio to follow Ophelia and keep guard over her lest she should cause harm to herself. He talks about sorrows and calamities that are coming, not as single spies, but in battalion. He enumerates the series of ominous events that have happened—the death of Polonius, the exile of Hamlet, unrest among the people and rebellious activities of Laertes, who has returned in secret from France and is trying to stir up trouble against his imperial authority.

Just at this moment Laertes, at the instigation of unknown enemies of Claudius, breaks into the palace, sword in hand, crying aloud for vengeance, and already acclaimed as king by his supporters. With passionate vehemence he lays the blame for his father's death upon the king. Suddenly Claudius finds himself defenceless and abandoned by his supporters. The Queen, almost beside herself with fear and incensed at the perfidy of the people, tries to throw herself between the king and Laertes. But Claudius boldly faces the situation that seems more than likely to end in disaster to himself. Unshaken, he does not for an instant lose his royal bearing, and by his imperturbable behaviour succeeds in persuading Laertes to restrain himself and discuss things reasonably. This attempt to come to an understanding, however, is jeopardized by the sudden return of the unhappy Ophelia, singing ditties and scattering flowers, and her pitiable condition again arouses the bitterest feelings in her brother's heart inflaming his desire for vengeance as no reasoned argument could have done. All the same, Laertes is deluded by Claudius's flattering words and solemn assurances to place all the facts concerning the death of Polonius before him and his friends.

Critical comments :

A considerable time is supposed to have passed between this scene and preceding one. Fortinbras, in the mean time, has started his homeward march after the victorious campaign against Poland and Laertes has returned from Paris. Hamlet too has had his perilous encounter with the pirates during his voyage to England and he has come back to Denmark. Also, in the mean time, Ophelia has gone mad with grief over the death of her father. The death of Polonius, never explained, and his secret burial, have caused suspicion and discontent among the populace, endangering the position of the king.

The most touching part of this scene is Ophelia's affliction. This gentle, quiet girl, pathetic in her sadness and resignation, who until now has always remained rather in the background, obediently carrying out her father's instructions, suddenly forces herself into the presence of others with a strange and abnormal air of vivacity and self confidence. Grief at her father's sudden and unexpected death has unbalanced her mind. Though her irrational and incoherent words betray her despair and the rift within her spirit, the pity she evokes springs largely from her lack of comprehension of her own misfortunes, her unfounded contentment, and the consolation

CC-0. Panjab University Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

she is able to find for herself. Even the villain Claudius is momentarily seized by pity. She is a white lily nipped in the bud.

Notes :

2. **Indeed distract**—not merely importunate, but quite out of her senses.

3. **Her mood.....pitied**—it is impossible not to pity her condition.

5. **There's tricks i' the world**—there are strange doings going on in the world. **Heart**—breast.

6. **Spurns.....Straws**—kicks impatiently at straws in her path ; is angry at the merest trifles. **In doubt**-in dubious language.

7-13. **Her speech.....unhappily**—her words in themselves convey no distinct meaning, yet used as they are in such disorder, they provoked their hearers to try together some meaning from them, to piece them together, so that they may give a coherent sense ; they (sc. the hearers) make a guess at that sense, and clumsily endeavour to suit the words to the interpretation they put upon them ; and those words, as they are eked out by her winks, nods and gestures, would certainly lead one to suppose that they possibly contain the thought of some great misfortune of which she is conscious, though conscious only in a dim, confused way.

14. **Strew**—unintentionally suggest.

15. **Ill breeding minds**—minds always ready to conceive evil, to put the worst construction upon anything said.

17. **To my.....is**—to my soul, ill at ease with itself, as is always the case when guilt is present to it ; cp-above, iii. I. 83, "thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

18. **Toy**—trifle. **Amiss**—disaster.

19-20. **So full.....spilt**—so full of clumsy suspicion is guilt that it betrays itself in the very fear of being discovered. The metaphor is that of a man who carrying a liquid is so excited by his fear of spilling it that the nervous feeling causes his hand to tremble and the liquid to run over.

23-4. **Know from**—distinguish from.

25-6. **By his shoon**—by his wearing the habit of a pilgrim : cockle-shells were worn by pilgrims in their hats as emblematical of their crossing the sea to visit Holy Land. **Sandal shoon**—shoes formed of sandals worn under, and attached by straps to the feet. **Shoon**—an archaic plural.

28. **Say you ?**—what is it you say ?

31-2. **At his.....stone**—graves of the poorer classes, especially in village churchyards, are generally covered with grass with a slab of stone at the foot having the date of birth, death, etc. engraved upon it.

35. **Shroud**—grave-clothes, winding-sheet.

37. **Larded**—richly covered.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

38-9. **Which.....showers**—the shroud of him who went to his grave bewept with showers of tears by his faithful lover.

41. **'lld**—yield, in the sense of reward.

41-2. **They say.....daughter**—an allusion to a story, told by Douce, of Christ paying a visit to a baker's shop and asking for a piece of bread, when the daughter rebuked her mother for giving him too large a piece, and as a punishment for her niggardly behaviour was ransformed into an owl.

43. **God.....table**—be present with you when you eat.

44. **Conceit.....father**—her fancy dwells upon her father's death.

45. **Let's have.....this**—let us have no dispute about this.

47. **Saint Valentines day**—on the feast of St. Valentine, birds, according to an old tradition, chose their mates for the year. "From this notie", says Dyer, "it has been suggested, arose the once popular practice of choosing valentines, and also the common belief that the first two single persons who meet in the morning of St. Valentine's day have a great chance of becoming married to each other." Douce traces the custom of choosing lovers on this day to the Luperealia or Roma, a festival held about the same date, and during which a similar custom prevailed.

48. **All betime**—at the earliest dawn of day.

49. **At your window**—greeting you at your window.

53. **Cannot.....weep**—cannot help weeping ; cannot choose to do anything but weep. **To think**-at the thought that.

57. **Give.....watch**—watch her carefully.

61-2 **They come.....battalions**—they do not come like single spies sent to discover the strength of the enemy, but in full force to attack his position.

63-4. **And he...remove**—and he by his violence the cause of his richly deserved banishment. **Muddied**—like a stream made muddy by heavy rain. Delius points out that this word and. **Unwholesome**—refer primarily to the blood, and then to the mood of the people.

65. **Thick.....whispers**—their thoughts and their language, so far as they dare let it be heard, are polluted with unwholesome matter, *i. e.*, dangerous ideas.

66. **For**—on account of. **Greenly**—without ripe judgement.

67. **In hugger-mugger**—in this secret and hasty way.

68. **Divided .....judgement**--estranged from her own sane judgement ; out of her senses.

69. **Are pictures**—are no better than pitctures.

70. **And as.....these**—and a circumstance as full or import as all these but together.

72. **Feeds on his wonder**—broods over the amazement caused by his father's death. **Keeps.....Clouds**—shuts himself up in gloomy reserve.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

73. **Wants not**—is not without. **Buzzers**—chattering fellow: fellows who go buzzing about him like noxious insects.

74. **Of his father's death**—as to the manner in which his father met his death.

75-7. **Where in.....ear**—in which suggestions the speaker, driven by necessity to substantiate his story, and having no actual circumstances to bring as proof, will not hesitate to accuse me from one person to another.

78. **A murdering-piece**—or murderer, was a cannon which discharged case-shot, *i. e.*, shot confined in a case which burst in the discharge and scattered the shot widely hence the **Superfluous death**—in the next line, any of the missiles being sufficient to cause death.

80. **My Switzers**—Swiss mercenaries were frequently employed as personal guards of the king in continental countries and even now form the Pope's body guard.

82. **Overpeering of his list**—when it raises its head above the boundary which usually confines it ; the idea is that of the great billows raising their crests as they dash over the shore. **List**—limit, literally a strips or border of cloth.

83. **Eats not the flats**—does not swallow up the level stretches of country.

84. **In a riotous head**—with an armed force of riotous citizens.

85. **Call him lord**—acknowledge his supremacy.

86. **As the world.....begin**—as though the world had only now to be started on it career.

87. **Antiquity.....known**—antiquity being treated by them as something that never had any existence, and custom as something which needed no recognition.

88-9. **The ratifiers.....king**—they as though it rested with them to ratify or annul, to support or overturn, every proposition, cry, etc.

90. **Caps.....clouds**—throwing up their caps, clapping their hands, and shouting at the top of their voices, they applaud their own decision to the very skies.

92. **How cheerfully.....cry**—with what "gallant chiding" these hounds hunt the false scent which they have so eagerly taken up !

93. **This is counter**—to hunt counter was to hunt the wrong way of the scent, to trace the scent backwards ; and here two ideas are combined, that of being on the wrong scent, and that of being on the right scent, but hunting back in the direction in which it had gone.

96. **Give me leave**—allow me to enter alone.

98. **Keep the door**—guard the door to prevent any aid being sent to the king.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

102. **That thy.....giant-like** ?—that you have broken out into a rebellion which has assumed such terrible proportions ?

103. **Let him go**—do not try to hold him back.

104. **Hedge**—protect as with a hedge which cannot be passed or overleaped.

105-6. **That treason.....will**—that treason is unable to do more than look over the hedge which separates it from the object of its vengeance, without being able to strike home.

110. **Let him.....fill**—let him state his demands in full.

111. **How.....dead** ? how came he to die ?

113. **Grace**—religious feeling.

114. **I dare damnation**—in such a cause as this I am ready to risk eternal damnation. **To this stand**—here I firmly take my stand ; this decision I am prepared to abide by.

115-7. **That both.....father**—that, come what may, I will give up all my hopes of happiness here and here and hereafter, rather than not pursue my vengeance for my father.

118. **My will.....world**—nothing in the world but my own free will.

119-20. **That.....loser**—"are you going to vent your rage on both friend and foe ; like a gambler who insists on sweeping the stakes (off the table), whether the point is in his favour or not ? (Moberly).

122. **Is't writ in your revenge**—is it a part of the revenge you have prescribed to yourself ?

123-4. **And for.....little**—and as regards the means at my command, I will make such prudent use of them that, though small, they shall go far.

127. **Life-rendering pelican**—from allowing its young to take fish out of its pouch, the pelican was popularly believed to nourish them on its life-blood.

128. **Repast**—feed, nourish.

131. **And am.....it**—and am deeply mained by it.

132-3. **It shall.....eye**—it shall force its way as directly to your judgement as the daylight.

135. **Heat**—*i.e.*, the heat burning in his head. **Seven times**—*i.e.* many times.

136. **The sense.....eye**—that sensibility and property by the eye is enabled to see.

137-8. **Thy madness.....scale**—I will exact such retribution as shall be more than adequate to the deed which has driven you mad. **Turn the beam**—cause the beam of the balance to how owing to the greater weight in our scale.

138. **Of may** !—*i.e.*, in the bloom of life's spring-time.

141. **Mortal**—subject to destruction.

142-4. **Nature.....loves**—where love is concerned, nature shows herself in her tenderes form, and in such cases it sends some

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

precious proof of itself (here Ophelia's soundness of mind) as a tribute of affection to follow to the grave that which was so dear to it (here her father).

145. **Barefaced**—with his face uncovered.

146. **Hey-non...nonny**—"Such unmeaning burdens are common in ballads of most languages". (Mares).

149-50. **Hadst thou.....thus**—no words of persuasion that you could urge, if you were in your senses, could stir me to revenge as these disjointed, incoherent, utterances.

152. **An**—if.

153. **The wheel**—according to Steevens, the refrain ; but the quotation by which he supports his explanation is generally regarded as mythical. Malone is inclined to think that the allusion is to the occupation of the girl whose song Ophelia quotes. He further suggests as possible that the allusion may to an instrument called by Chaucer a rate, which was played upon by the friction of a wheel.

153-4. **It is.....daughter**—the ballad is on the subject of the false steward who, etc. No such ballad has yet been discovered.

155. **This nothing's.....matter**—these incoherent words stir my soul more than sensible ones.

156. **Rosemary**—from lat, ros marinus, or ros moris, as Ovid calls it, the plant which delights in the sea spray, it was an emblem of faithful remembrance, and, according to Staunton, is here presented to Laertes, whom Ophelia in her distraction probably confounds with her lover. **For**—appropriate to, emblematical of.

157. **Pansies**—from F. pensees, thoughts, of which the flower is supposed to be symbolical.

158. **Document**—a writer in the Ed. Rev. for July 1869 shows that the word is here used 'in its earlier and etymological sense of instruction, lesson, teaching".

159. **Fitted**—each with its fitting emblem.

160. **Fennel.....columbines**—presented to the king as emblems of cajolery and ingratitude. **There's rue for you**—said to the queen.

161-2. **We may.....Sundays**—"Ophelia only means, I think, that the queen may with peculiar propriety on Sundays, when she solicits pardon for the crime which she has so much occasion to rue and repent of, call her 'rue' herb of grace".....(Malone).

162. **With a difference**...according to the writer in the Ed. Rev already quoted, one of the properties of rue was that of checking immodest thoughts, a herb therefore appropriate to the queen.

163. **A daisy** —it does not appear to whom the daisy is given according to Greene, quoted by Henley, it was a "dissembling flower, and was used as a warning to young girls not to trust the fair promises of men. **Violets**—emblematical of fidelity.

163. **Made a good end**—died as a good man should die; at peace with all men and trusting to God's mercy.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

166. Thought-melancholy. **Passion**—suffering. **Hell itself**—the most terrible thoughts.

167. **She turns.....prettiness**—she lends a grace and attractiveness by the words in which she clothes them.

172. **Go.....deathbed**—*i. e.*, you need never hope to see him again however long you may live.

175. **All flaxen**—as white as flax. **All**—intensive.

177. **And we.....moan**—and we but waste our moans.

179. **And of.....souls**—"Many epitaphs closed with such a pious prayer as this" (Cl. Pr. Edd.)

180-1. **I must.....right**—you do me wrong unless you allow me to commune with you in your grief, *i. e.*, unless you tell me what your wishes are in regard to your father's death, and allow me to counsel you in the matter.

181-2. **Go but.....will**—do but go aside and choose out from your friends those who are likely to give you the best advice.

184-5. **If by.....touch'd**—if their verdict is that I am implicated in this crime directly or indirectly. **Find**—used in the technical sense of the finding of a jury.

188. **Be you.....us**—allow yourself patiently to listen to what I have to say.

189-90. **And we.....content**—and you will find that I shall endeavour as earnestly as yourself to give peace to your mind. **Labour.....soul**—labour with your heart and soul.

191. **His means of death**—the manner of his death.

192. **No trophy**—in which there was no memorial erected to him; properly a monument to mark the spot at which the enemy turned and fled. **Hatchment**—"not only the sword, but the helmet gauntlets, spurs, and tabard (*i. e.*, a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted.....) are hung over the grave of every knight." (Sir J. Hawkins).

193. **No noble.....ostentation**—no such rites as his rank demanded, none of the funeral pomp with he might justly claim.

194-5. **Cry.....question**—call so loudly, as it were with his voice from heaven, that I am bound in all filial love to inquire into the circumstances and find out the meaning of them.

196. **And where.....fall**—and let the fullest vengeance fall upon him who deserves it. **Axe**—as the implement used in the execution of criminals.

ACT IV

SCENE VI

Summary of the scene :

This is a brief link scene. Some sailors come to Horatio and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by MoE-IKS. Digitized by eGangotri

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

give him a letter from Hamlet. The Prince informs Horatio that the ship in which he set sail for England was attacked by pirates. He was eventually taken prisoner by them, while Rosencrantz and Guildenstern sailed on for England. The pirates later released him and he secretly returned to Denmark. The Prince further requests Horatio to conduct these sailors to the presence of the king for whom also he is sending letters through them. Thereafter Horatio is requested to meet him under the directions and escort of the sailors.

Critical Comments :

This scene is meant only to give information about the movements of Hamlet after his departure from Elsinore. It gives out, that after all, all is not lost for Hamlet. Hamlet is once again in the thick of action.

Notes :

1. **What are they**—What manner of men.
5. **I should be greeted**—I am likely to receive a greeting.
7. **Let him**—may he.
9. **Bound**—on his way for.
10. **Let to know**—informed ; we still say 'let me know, *i. e.* tell me.
12. **Overlooked**—read.
13. **Some.....king**—some means of access to, etc.
14. **Ere we.....sea**—before we had been two days at sea.
15. **Of.....appointment**—fitted out in most warlike fashion, *i. e* heavily armed.

16-7. **In the grapple**—as we grappled, *i.e.* threw out our grappling—irons in order to hold their vessel fast to ours. **Boarded**—leaped on board. **On the instant**—just as I did so.

19-20. **But they.....them**—but their mercy was due to politic reasons, for they wanted me in returns to do them a service with the king.

21. **Repair**—make your way to return to one's own country.
22. **As thou**—as that with which you.
23. **Yet are....matter**—Yet no words would describe the matter in sufficiently strong language ; the metaphor is that of shot not heavy enough for the calibre of a gun.
28. **I will . ...letters**—I will give you the means, opportunity, of delivering these letters.
29. **And do't.....me**—And do it all the more quickly that by my doing so etc.

ACT IV

SCENE VII

The King and Laertes are now confidentially discussing further line of action for righting the great wrong done in the death of Polonius. The vile king has fully succeeded in convincing Laertes of his innocence in the matter and in putting the entire blame on

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hamlet's head. The King further tells him that Hamlet wanted to take his life also. On being asked why he did not take any action against Hamlet even on such a grave charge, the king gives two very plausible explanations. In the first place, the Queen, Hamlet's mother stood in the way of justice. He could not in any way proceed against him on account of the Queen. In the second place, he also hesitated in proceeding against him because of "the great love the general gender bear him". However the king convinces Laertes that Hamlet is their common enemy.

Their talk is interrupted by the arrival of a messenger bringing a letter for the king from Hamlet. This gives a sudden turn to the whole situation. The King is taken aback to learn that Hamlet has come back to Denmark. The King's great plan of Hamlet's execution in England has miscarried. But the treacherous King immediately embarks upon another, and perhaps more perilous plan, of disposing of Hamlet. He pricks the feelings of Laertes and fires him with burning itch for revenge. Then unfolding his plot to Laertes, Claudius says that he will arrange a contest of fencing between Laertes and Hamlet, in which Leartes will be secretly provided with a sharp weapon with which he can easily kill Hamlet. Laertes adds that he will rather put a deadly poison upon the point of his sword so that even a scratch will do the work. The King, gratified at the speed with which the seeds of evil have taken roots, puts the crowning touch to the plan by announcing that in any case he will have a cup of poison ready for Hamlet.

This criminal plot has scarcely been hatched when the Queen brings the tragic news of Ophelia's death. The demented girl had been wandering by a stream, trying to hang her garland upon the willows, loosing her footing she had fallen into the water, and, making no efforts to save herself, been drowned. Laertes, a moment ago consumed by anger now numbed by grief. Twice he asks for confirmation that she has really lost her life, and then hastens away ashamed of the tears he cannot restrain.

Critical Comments :

Two important events take place in this scene : the death of Ophelia and the finalisation of the plot against the life of Hamlet. The death of Ophelia is meant to what the desire for revenge in the heart of Laertes. Laertes is now so enraged both with grief and anger that he cannot pull himself out of the plot. Laertes now joins hands with Claudius against the life of Hamlet and the plot is ready. The question now is : Will Hamlet fall a victim to this plot or will he overcome his powerful adversaries and steer himself out of the plot ?

Notes :

1. **Now must.....seal**—after what you have heard, you can no longer fail to acquit me fall complicity in your father's death.
2. **And you friend**—nor can you help heartily recognizing mase a friend.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

3. **knowing**—intelligent.

5. **It well appears**—it appears plain.

6. **Proceeded not**—took no action to punish. **Feats**—deeds.

7. **Crimeful**—full of crime, desperately criminal. **Capital**—heinous,

8-9. **As by.....up**—as by all considerations of your own safety, of what wisdom dictated, and everything else, you were so strongly prompted to do.

10. **Unsinew'd**—to have no force in them.

12. **By his looks**—on his looks ; on the sight of him.

13. **Be .....which**—"perhaps a confusion between 'be it either' and 'be it whichever of the two'.

14. **She's so.....soul**—my life and soul (*i. e.* I in every thing) are so wrapped up in her ; she is so much a part of my existence.

16. **I could .....her**—I could not but move as she moves.

17. **Why to.....go**—why I could not have recourse to a public trial.

18. **The general gender**—the common race, the common people.

19-21. **Who.....graces**—who seeing his offences with their own eyes (*i. e.* eyes prejudiced in his favour), would see in his letters only further reason to love him (those letters being regarded as an act of injustice calling for their pity). Johnson points out that the simile would have been more appropriate if the spring had changed base metals into gold ; there does not appear to be an allusion to any particular spring, as Reed supposed.

21. **My arrows**—my scheme for punishing him.

22. **Zoo slightly.....wind**—too light to meet so strong a wind.

23-4. **Would have.....them**—would have been blown back in my face instead of hitting the mark at which they were aimed.

25-26. **And so.....terms**—and in this way my father has been lost to me, and my sister been driven into circumstances of desperation.

27. **If praises.....again**—if I may speak of her as she once was.

28-9. **Stood.....perfections**—proudly challenged all modern times to produce one equal to her various perfections : **On mount**—where the challenge of her worth could be widely heard.

30. **Break .....that**—do not allow your sleep to be broken by the fear that you may not be able to wreak your revenge.

31. **That we.....dull**—that we are of so spiritless and inert a nature. **Flat**—a metaphor from a liquid that has become insipid.

32-3. **That we pastime**—that we can endure to have danger flaunt us in the face and treat the matter as though it were a mere joke. **Our beard**—with an allusion to the insult conveyed in plucking a man by the beard.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

34. **I.....we**—in the former case speaking of himself as a man, in the latter of himself as a king.

35. **That**—sc. fact.

45-6. **First.....thereunto**—first asking your gracious permission to do so.

46-7. **My sudden..... return**—my return, the suddenness of which is only exceeded by its strangeness.

49. **Should**—can possibly.

50. **Abuse**—deception.

51. **Character**—handwriting.

54. **I'm lost in it**—I am completely baffled by the event.

56. **That**—to think that. **Live and tell**—live to tell, as we should now say.

58. **As how.....otherwise** ?—and yet I know not how it can be so, or how it can be otherwise : that he should have returned in face of the measures I took, is inexplicable : and yet that he should not have returned is, in face of the letter received, equally inexplicable; the one thing is as difficult to believe as the other.

59. **Ruled by me**—guided by my advice.

60. **So.....peace**—provided that your advice does not compel me to keep peace with him.

62. **As checking at**—in consequence of his rebeling against, starting back in alarm at.

63. **Work him**—persuade him ; work upon him so that he will undertake

65. **Under.....fall**—beneath the weight of which he shall have no choice but to succumb.

66. **And for.....breathe**—and not the smallest breath of blame for his death shall ever light on us.

67. **Uncharge the practice**—acquit our stratagem of any evil intention against him. **Practice**—plot.

69. **The rather**—all the more readily.

70. **Organ**—instrument. **It falls right**—everything conspires to that end ; all things tend to a successful carrying out of our plan.

72. **And that.....hearing**—and that too when Hamlet was present : quality, accomplishment.

73.. **Your sum of parts**—all your gifts together. **Parts**—in the sense of gifts accomplishments, derives itself from the ideal of a man being put together of several parts.

75. **Regard**—opinion.

76. **Of.....stege**—which was lowest in rank, least worthy of respect. **Stege**—meaning originally seat, came to be used of rank owing to the care that was taken to place people at table exactly according to their rank.

77. **A very.....youth**—a mere trifling ornament to youth.

78. **Becomes**—is in accordance with.

79. **Light.....livery**—the airy, jaunty, dress.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

80-1. **Than settled.....graveness**—than sedate old age accords with the warm clothing which concerns, is of importance to (and so is chosen with regard to) health and gravity of demeanour. **His sables and his weeds**—a hendiadys for his clothes formed of sables.

82. **Here was**—there was at this court.

84. **Can well.....horseback**—are adepts in horsemanship. **Can**—are skilled in.

86. **In't**—sc. horsemanship. **Grew.....seat**—seat as though riveted to his saddle.

86. **Doing**—feats.

87-8. **Topp'd my thought**—surpassed anything I had ever conceived.

89. **In forgery .....tricks**—in conjuring up in my fancy feats of dexterity. **Shapes**—embodiments of fancy.

93. **Brooch**—an ornament in former days often worn in the hat, now worn by women only at the throat.

95. **Made confession of you**—admitted your exellence in various exercises. **Confession**—"have used because Lamond would not willingly acknowledge the superiority of Laertes over the French in the art of fighting." (Delius)

96-8. **And gave..... especially**—and gave such report of your masterly skill in the science and practice of defence, more especially when using your rapier: Laertes was reported by him as being good at all weapons, the broadsword, lance, etc., but as being something quite out of the common way when handling the rapier.

100. **If one.....you**—if one could be found your equal at fencing.

101-2. **Had neither..... them**—seemed when fencing with you to have none of the power of attack, so necessary in fencing, none of the skill by which alone blows can be warded off, none of that keen sight necessary equally in offence and defence.

103. **Did.....envy**—so poisoned the mind of Hamlet with the envy which his report excited.

105. **To play with him**—that you might play a match with him. **To play**—expresses the result not the object of his coming.

108-9. **Or are you..... heart** ?—or are you like the picture of some one in deep grief, a mere face without the heart beating beneath in unison with the look upon it ? *i.e.*. in your grief deeply seated and prepared to show its reality by action ?

111-3. **But that.....it**—but that I see, by observation of occurrences which demonstrate the fact beyond all doubt, that the spark and fire of love gradually burns low, as I know by my own experience that its growth also is a gradual one.

114-5. **There lives.....it**—while love is burning most brightly, even then there is in it something which will sooner or later abate its fervour, just as the wick which ceases to give forth

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

light owing to the wax or tallow being burnt too low to reach and nourish it, and this snuff only dims the brightness of the flame.

116. **And nothing..... still**—and nothing continues for a long period at the same pitch of excellence. **Still**—continually.

117-8. **For goodness.....much**—for goodness itself, growing to a fulness, dies of its own excess.

118-9. **That we.....would**—that which we desire to do, we ought to do while the desire is strong upon us. **This 'would**,—this desire, inclination.

122-3. **And then.....easing**—and then this feeling of duty, without being put into action, is as hurtful to moral nature as a sigh, drawn out of mere wantonness without there being any sufficient cause for it, is to the physical nature, though for the moment it may give relief ; an allusion to the old belief that sighing draws drops of blood from the heart.

123. **But.....ulcer**—but, to probe the ulcer to the bottom of the matter.

124. **Hamlet comes back**—Hamlet, as we have just heard, is on his way back, and will soon be here, *i. e.* let us be prepared for his return, accept it as certain that he is returning.

127. **Sanctuarize**—give refuge to, shield ; criminals from early days, if they could take refuge in a sacred building, were beyond the reach of law, and when doing so were said to "take sanctuary"

129. **Will you.....chamber** ?—will you do this, viz., shut yourself up in your rooms ?

131. **Put on**—instigate. **These shall**—those who shall.

132. **Set.....on**—give a fresh coating of exaggerated praise to etc.

134. **Wager.....heads**—lay waggers as to which of you will win. **Remiss**—careless ; "a word seldom if ever used now except with reference to some particular act of negligence.

135. **Free from all contriving**—innocent of all plotting himself, and therefore unsuspicious of others.

136. **Peruse**—carefully examine.

137. **With a little shuffling**—with a little trickery in the matter of choosing your foil, *i.e.;* by mibing, during a pause in the combat, taking that foil up.

138. **Unbated**—not blunted by having a button, a round piece of leather, at its point. **A pass of practice**—a treacherous thrust.

139. **Requite.....father**—pay him back for the murder of your father.

141. **Mountebank**—quack doctor ; literally one who mounts on a bench to proclaim his nostrums.

142. **Mortal**—deadly. **But dip**—if one only dips.

143. **Cataplasm**—plaster, poultice. **So rare**—however rare in its effects.

144. **All simples.....virtue**—all efficacious herbs.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

147. **Contagion**—infectious poison. **Gall**—rub the skin off any part of him,

148. **It may be death**—the result will be death.

149-50. **Weigh.....shape**—let us consider how we may take such advantage of time and means as will best accommodate us to the form of proceeding we must adopt; the metaphor is that of getting a garment to fit the body.

151. **And that.....performance**—and if we should play our parts so badly that our object reveal itself.

153. **A back**—something in reserve to strengthen it, an inner lining as it were. **Second**—something to assist (as in a duel). **Hold**—firm, not give way.

154. **If this.....proof**—if this should fly to pieces when put to the proof. Before being issued for use, weapons, such as cannon etc., are 'proved' by putting a great strain upon them. loading them with a heavier charge than will be ordinary used ; and if not well made they 'blast', blow to pieces in the trial.

156. **I ha't**—I have it, *i. e.* I have hit upon a capital device.

157. **Motion**—the lunging and retiring in making and receiving thrusts. **Dry**—thirsty.

158, **As make.....end**—with which object (sc. that you may both become hot and thirsty) take care to let your bouts be as violent as possible. **Bout**—properly a turn ; then the turnings and twistings in a personal encounter especially in fencing. **Dan**—bont, a turn.

159. **And that**—and when.

160. **Chalice**—cup. **For the nonce**—for the occasion.

161. **Stuck**—thrust.

162. **Our.....there**—our project may by this means hold good, be carried through.

166. **Grows**—which grows. **Aslant**—leaning over, literally on slant.

167. **Hoar**—the under side of the leaves of the willow being.

168. **With**—bearing. **Fantastic**—fancifully made up of various flowers.

169. **Crow-flowers.....purples**—"the crowflower, according to Parkinson, was called The Foyre Mayde of France the 'long purples' are or spring of life...(Farren).

170. **Pendent**—hanging over the water. **Her coronet weed**—the flowers she had woven into a chaplet.

171. **Clambering.....broke**—as she was making her way along the sloping trunk in order to hang her flowers on its boughs, a branch on which her foot rested, as though resenting her action, suddenly gave way. **Sliver**—a small branch, properly a slice.

174. **And.....up**—and for a time they kept her afloat, like a mermaid in her natural element.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

175. **Which time**—during which time. *i. e.* as long as she was borne up by her clothes. **Snatches**—odds and ends ; such as she sang in Scene 5.

176. **As one.....distress**—as though she were insensible of the plight in which she was. **Incapable**—"incapable of help", *i. e.* not to be helped.

177-8. **Or like.....element**—or as though she were a creature native to that element and endowed with properties suitable to existence in it. **Indued**—a corruption of endued in the sense of 'endow'.

179. **Heavy**—literally, but with a play on the word in the sense of being overcome, made stupid, by intoxicating liquors.

180-1 **Pull'd.....death**—put an end to her melody by dragging her down to death at the bottom of the stream.

185. **It is our trick**—it is a habit we cannot shake off.

186-7. **When these.....out**—when these tears have passed away, my thoughts will then be of revenge only.

188. **That.....blaze**—that is eager to blaze out.

189. **But.....it**—if it were not extinguished by these foolish tears.

190. **How.....calm**—how much trouble I had in calming.

191. **Will.....again**—will set it in motion again.

ACT V

SCENE I

Summary of the Scene :

This scene unexpectedly opens in a graveyard, where a grave-digger and his assistant are at work. They are digging a grave. Hamlet and Horatio happen to reach there by chance. They watch the grave-diggers at work and overhear their conversation. From their conversation they learn that the grave was being prepared for one who had committed suicide. The first grave-digger does his best to appear an able legician and displays much undigested and irrelevant wisdom. He asks his companion ludicrous questions in the form of riddles and tries to give himself an air of superior knowledge. First, there is a debate between them over the meaning of the word "gentle-man". The first grave-digger says that a gentleman is one who bears arms. According to this definition, he says, gardeners, ditchers and grave-diggers are gentleman, since they all bear arms. They are professionally related to Adam who according to Scriptures, did the job of digging. Then they pass on to another riddle, viz., who is the best builder ? The answer is suggested that gallows-maker is the best builder but finally it is established that grave-digger is the best builder for he builds permanent house for everyone.

The scene leads Hamlet to reflect on the futility of human life and ambitions. The grave-digger pulls out skull after skull. Hamlet wonders whose skulls they might have been. One might have been a

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

politician, another a flattering courtier, and a third per chance a lawyer. All their schemes and designs, ambitions and aspirations, power and pelf have thus come to dust. No human being, however clever or powerful, can escape this grotesque fate. One of the skulls pulled out by the digger belonged to Yorick, the court-jester who had borne Hamlet in his arms as a child.

Thus reflecting Hamlet and Horatio come forward and ask the grave-diggers whose grave they were digging. They replied equivocally. Presently they see a solemn funeral procession approach the graveyard. The king, the Queen, Laertes and important courtiers are in the funeral procession. Now Hamlet discovers, to his deep shock and repentance, that it is Ophelia who is dead and brought to the graveyard. Hamlet stands aside and watches the rites. Ophelia's interment is preceded by a heated argument between the priest who is not prepared to accord her full Christian burial rites because of the suspicion of suicide, and Laertes, who is greatly enraged at such clerical intolerance. After the Queen, with words of sympathy and sorrow has strewn flowers upon the coffin, Laertes, breaking out in wild denunciation of Hamlet, whom he holds to be the real murderer of Ophelia, leaps into the grave and with rhetorical expressions of despair demands that he shall be buried with his sister. This is too much for Hamlet, who has untill now remained quiet, and he also jumps into the grave, asserting that forty thousand brothers *li*ke Laertes could not love Ophelia more then he did. There is a scuffle between Laertes and Hamlet in the grave of Ophelia. The king and the Queen intervene and separate Hamlet and Laertes. The Queen reminds Laertes that Hamlet's behaviour is the behaviour of a mad man and the king quietly speaks into the ears of Laertes that he should keep patience and execute the plan finalised by them the previous night.

Critical Comments ;

Schucking has some very important observations to make on the importance of this scene. He say that strictly speaking this scene has no direct bearing on the development of action of the play but it has an embellishment of a special kind. To begin with, the scenic effect of a particular milieu is consistently conveyed. The grave-digger at his task, and on the ground the skull, at the odour of which Hamlet holds his nose ; later the pageant of the burial cortege, and the strewing of flowers in the open grave—all imply a greater use of theatrical properties than is usual, and help to present a slice of life imbued with a particular emotional atmosphere, in this case irradiated with shafts of ironic humour. Yet this humour has nothing course or offensive in it, for though at first sight such subjects as suicide, dead bodies, and graves hardly appear suitable for comic treatment, they here take on a different aspect, largely because they are seen through the eyes of one who has lost all feeling of repulsion for what is horrible or sad in them.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In giving the part of the grave-digger to the clown Shakespeare is catering for the taste of the public who liked to have the tragic-tension broken now and again. It was usual enough for the clown to appear in scenes having little connection with the play ; but here Shakespeare gives him a special duty and a particular physiognomy. In certain ways he is true to type noticeably in his lack of connexion with the rest of the play and in his refreshing coarseness. There is comedy in the self-importance with which he expounds his professional experience with dead bodies, and in the complacent way in which he airs opinions on matters of which he knows nothing. The unfeeling, yet perhaps inevitable, lack of reverence which he shows as he goes about his melancholy task contracts effectively with Hamlet's infinitely nervous world. The impression made on Hamlet by the graveyard serves to strengthen him in his attitude.

Notes :

2. **Salvation**—the clown's blunder for demnation.

4-5. **Straight**—forthwith, without delay. **Crowner**—coroner, literally merely an officer of the crown, but used specially of one appointed to hold inquests into the cause of death. **Finds.....burial**—decides that Christian burial may be granted, she not having committed the felony of suicide. **Finds**—the technical term for the decision of the coroner.

9. '**Se offendendo**'—another blunder of the Clown's for so defendento, in self defence, "a finding of the jury in justifiable homicide" (Caldecott).

11. **Three branches**—"ridicule on scholastic divisions without distinction and of distinctions without difference (Warburtion).

12. **Argal**—a corruption of Lat ergo, therefore.

13. **Goodman**—a familiar appellation, frequent in Shakespeare old fellow. **Delver**—digger *i. e.*, grave-digger.

14. **Give me leave**—allow me to interrupt you.

16. **Will he, nil he**—he goes whether his intention is to do so or not ; **Nill**—he will, not will

21. **Quest**—inquest. This is supposed to be an allusion to an inquest in a case of forfeiture of a lease to the crown in consequence of the suicide by drowning of Sir John Hales, a case which Shakespeare may have heard talked about.

22. **Will... on't**—do you wish to know the whole truth of the matter ? If so, I will tell you that, etc.

23-4. **Out.....burial**—*i. e.*, as suicides are buried, sc. in the cross roads with a stake driven through the heart.

25. **There thou Say'st**—there you tell the truth, speak to the purpose.

26. **Should have.....to**—should be countenanced in drowning etc., by being allowed Christian burial.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

27. **Even Christian**—fellow Christian. **Come, my spade**—come, let me take my spade, and get to my work.

28. **There is.....profession**—there are no gentleman that can claim anything like old descent except gardener, etc., and they alone still keep up the profession of the first of all ancestors, Adam.

30. **A gentleman**—one entitled to the term 'gentle', as opposed to 'simple'.

31. **Bore arms**—again in a double sense (1) carring arms, in Adam's case a spade, and (2) having a coat of arms, a symbol of gentle birth.

35. **Arms**—again in a double sense (1) the arms of the body, (2) implements,

36. **To the purpose**—in a rational way. **Confess thyself**—an ass, he was going to add.

37. **Go to**—pooh.

38. **What is he**—what kind of person is he.

41. **Tanants—occupants**—as though a man when hanged took a lease of the gallows.

42-3. **The gallows does well**—the gallows, as you well say, do well, though not in the way you say, that of lasting a long time. Dogberry-like, he patronizingly commends his comrade's good sense in citing the gallows as doing well, but with his superior wisdom points out in what their doing well consists.

43-4. **It does.....ill**—sc. by putting them out of the way.

46. **To again, come**—make another effort to answer my question.

49. **Ay.....unyoke**—yes answer that, and you may then give over your work : metaphorically unharness the oxen with which he is ploughing.

51. **To't, go**—at it, let me hear you answer.

52. **Mass**—*i. e.*, by the mass.

53-4 **Your dull ass**—a dull ass like you.

56. **Yaughan**—probably the best explanation of this word about which there have been so many conjectures, is that suggested by Nicholson, that it was the name of an ale-house keeper in the neighbourhood of the Globe Theatre.

57. **Stoup**—flagon.

58-61. **In youth.....meet**—the clown's version of part of a ballad in Tottel's Miscellany.

60. **To contract.....behave**—these words probably have no meaning : the original runs "I lothe that I did love. In youth I thought swete ; As time requires for my behave Methinks they are not mete."

61. **Meet**—fitting, suitable.

62. **Feeling of his business**—no sense of the sadness of the task on which he is engaged.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

64. **Custom**.....**easiness**—from a long habit, his occupation, as being his own (proper to him) has lost all unpleasant association : has made him callous to the fact of its being of a said nature.

65-6. **The hand** .....**sense**—the hand which is least employed (*i. e.*, in any rough work) is always the most delicately sensitive.

69. **Shipped**—carted, as we might say. **Intil**—into.

70. **Such**—as I am ; the words being made doubly ludicrous by his throwing up a skull as he utters then.

72. **Jowis**—dashes.

74. **Politician**—plotter, schemer. **Over reaches**—used in a double sense of overtaking, getting hold of, with his spade, and of getting the better of by cunning.

79. **Lord such a one**—some lord or other whose name is not specified.

82. **My lady worm's**—*i. e.*, the property, perquisite of, etc. shapeless with its jaws no longer adhering to the rest of the skull.

83. **Mazzard**—a burlesque word for the head.

84. **Revolution**—used in a double sense of change, and of being rolled about. **And**.....**seet**—supposing we had the knack to understand it.

85. **Cost**.....**breeding**—gave no more trouble to breed.

85-6. **But to**.....**'em**—than that they should be used for playing at loggars ; the Cl. Pr, Edd, abridging a description of the game sent them by the Revd. G. Gould, say that the game resembled bowls, but with notable differences. First, it is played not on a green, but on a floor strewed with ashes. The Jack is a wheel made of some hard wood, the loggat, of which each player has three is a truncated cone, held fightly at the thin end, and the object as at bowls, is to pitch them so as to lie as nearly as possible to the Jack.

92. **Quiddities**—quiditas, the distinctive nature of a thing, brought into a by-word by the nice distinction of the schools' (Wedgwood, Diet). **Quillets**—frivolous distinctions.

93. **Tricks**—legal chicaneries.

94. **Sconce**—properly a small fort.

95. **Of his action of battery**—of the action for battery (assult) which, if he chose, he might bring against him.

97-8. **His statutes**.....**recoveries**—"A recovery with a double voucher is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from two persons (the latter of whom is always the common crier, or some such inferior person) being successively vouched, or called upon to warrant the tenant's title. Both 'fines' and 'recoveries' are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. 'Statutes' are (not acts of parliament, but) statutes-merchant and staple, particular modes of recognizance or acknowledgment for securing debts, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. 'Statutes' and 'recognizances' are constantly mentioned together in the convenants of a purchase deed" (Ritson).

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

98. **Fine of his fines**—the end of all his legal practice all that comes of his long practising as a lawyer.

98-9. **The recovery of his recoveries**—all that he recovers gets in return for the recoveries in which, when alive, he was engaged. **Fine dirt**—Rushton (Shakespeare as a lawyer, p. 10) explains **Fine** here, as in 1. 98, in the sense of last. "His fine pate filled, not with fine dirt, but with the last dirt which will ever occupy it, leaving a satirical inference to be drawn, that, even in his lifetime his head was filled with dirt"; but if this be the primary sense, there must also be play upon the word in its ordinary sense.

100. **Vouch.....purchases**—give him no better title to his purchases, even though those vouchers were double ones.

101. **Than the.....indentures**—than the mere parchment on which indentures are written. "Indentures were agreements made out in duplicate, of which each party kept one. Both were written on the same sheet, which was cut in two in a crooked or indented line (whence the name), in order that the fitting of the two parts might prove the genuineness of both in case of dispute" (Cl. pr. Edd).

102. **Inheritor**—possessor, owner.

106. **And of.....too**—accurately speaking, it is vellum that is made of calf skins, parchment of sheep or goat skins.

107-8. **They are.....that**—those who trust to parchment are but dolts; "as 'assurance' is the legal evidence of the transfer of property" (Heard, Shakespeare as a Lawyer).

109. **Sirrah**—sir; a term used more generally to inferiors, or with disrespect or unbecoming familiarity to superiors; occasionally applied to women.

113. **Liest**—with a play upon the word in its two senses.

114. **On't**, of it.

117. **The quick**—the living.

123. **For none, neither**—for neither the one nor the other, either.

127. **Absolute**—precise, punctilious about accuracy.

127-8. **By the card**—with precision; according to some the reference is to the mariners' chart; according to others to the card on which the points of the compass were marked, according to others again to the card and calendar of etiquette, or book of manners, of which, says Staunton, several were published in Shakespeare's time.

129. **These three years**—*i. e.*, for a considerable time past.

130. **Picked smart**—a sore on the hands or feet due to great cold.

133. **Of all.....year**—if you wish me to be precise as to the exact day, why, etc.

141. **It's.....there**—it does not matter much.

143-4. **There.....he**—here again Marston. The Malcontent. iii. 1. 100, 1, seems to have followed Shakespeare, "Your lordship

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

shall ever find.....amongst an hundred Englishmen, four-scure and ten madmen".

149. **Upon what ground** ?—owing to what causes ? The clown in the next line takes. **Ground**—in its literal sense.

154. **Pocky corses**—bodies of those who have died of the smallpox.

154-5. **Will scarce.....in**—will scarcely keep from decomposition till the funeral. **You**—the colloquial dative.

166. **A pestilence.....rogue** !—curses on him, as such a mad rogue deserves !

157. **Rhenish**—Rhine wine.

168. **Yorick**—said to be the German and Danish Georg, Jorg, our George, the English representing the foreign and having the same sound.

172. **A fellow.....jest**—a fellow of inexhaustible wit.

174. **It**—"used in reference to the idea of having been borne on the back of him whose skeleton remains are thus suddenly presented to the speaker's gaze, the idea of having caressed and been fondled by one whose mouldering fleshless skull is now held in the speaker's hand" (Clarke).

175. **My gorge rises at it**—I feel sick at the very idea ; the **Gorge** is the throat, and the 'rising' is that feeling in the throat which accompanies the inclination to vomit.

178. **On a roar**—we should now say 'in a roar'.

179. **Quite chap-fallen**—utterly downcast, without so much as a smile on your face. **My lady's**—not a particular lady, but any one to whom the title was applicable.

180. **Let her paint**—even if she should lay on the paint.

181. **Favour**—appearance used especially of the features.

185. **I' the earth**—when buried.

189. **Return**—in returning to the dust of which we are made.

192. **Twere.....so**—to follow out the idea would be but *idle* speculation, a mere waste of ingenuity.

193-4. **With modesty**—without any exaggeration.

196. **Loam**—a mixture of clay and sand.

199. **Imperious**—imperial ; though Shakespeare frequently uses Imperious, for imperial, he rarely, if ever, uses imperial for imperious, in its modern sense of dictatorial.

202. **Flaw**—sudden gust of wind.

203. **Aside**—let us stand aside.

205. **Such maimed rites**—such incomplete rites.

207. **Fordo**—destroy. **Estate**—rank, position.

208. **Couch we**—let us lie close as not to be seen.

209. **What ceremony else** ?—what further ceremonies have to be performed ? *i. e.*, surely this does not complete the usual rites.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Digital Collection Bantalab Jammu

212-3. **Her obsequies.....warranty**—we have gone as far in the matter of ritual observance as we have authority for doing. **Her death**—the manner of her death.

214. **But that.....order**—if it were not that the king's command, which we dare not disobey, over-rules us as regards the proceedings usual in such case.

216. **For**—in the place of.

217. **Shards**—potsherds, pieces of broken crockery.

219. **Crants**—a coronet, or tire for the head ; **Worn by**—maidens till they were married ; a singular noun, from Ger. krantz. A writer in the Ed. Rev. for July, 1869, has shown by extracts from Weber's introduction to the balled of Child Axe Wold, that "the burial of a northern maiden is still appropriately marked, and maiden strewments."

219. **Her maiden strewments**—the strewing of flowers upon the bier, such as was common at the funeral of a maid or wife, or on over With maiden flowers, that all the world may know I was a chaste wife to my grave."

219-20. **And the.....burial**—"In these words, reference is still made to the marriage rites, which in the case of maidens are sadly parodied in the funeral rites. As the bride was brought home to her husband's house with bell and wedding festivity, so the dead maiden is brought to her last home with 'bell and burial' (Cl. Pr. Edd.)

221. **Must.....done** ?—is it forbidden to performed any further rites ? In modern English the words would mean 'is it not necessary to', etc. The priest seems to be indignantly repeating Leartes' words, with a special emphasis on **more**—not to be confirming them.

223. **To sing**—by singing ; if we were to sing. **Requiem**—a mass for the repose of the dead, so called from beginning with the words Requiem enterman donaeis, Domine, grant enternal peace to them, O Lord.

224. **Peace parted souls**—souls which have departed the body in peace.

226. **May violets Spring** !—cp. Tennyson. In Memoriam, XVIII. 3, 4, "And from his ashes may be made. The violet of his native land". **Churlish**—in refusing her the full rites of burial.

228. **Howling**—*i. e.*, in the torments of hell.

230. **I hoped.....been**—"in the Elizabethan, as in early English authors, after verbs of hoping, intending, or verbs signifying that something ought to have been done, but was not, the complete present infinitive is used."

231. **Thought**—fondly expected. **Deck'd**--with flowers.

231. **T'have**—this is the reading of the folios ; the quartos omit the sign of the infinitive.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

234. **Thy most ingenious sense**—thy sense, that most cunningly devised creation of God.

235. **Hold.....awhile**—do not yet fill up the grave.

238. **This flat**—this level surface.

239. **Pelion**—a lofty range of mountains in Thessaly. In their war with the gods, the giants are said to have attempted to heap Ossa and Olympus on Pelion, or Pelion and Ossa on Olympus, in order to scale heaven. **Skyish**—reaching almost to the sky, Olympus being the loftiest of the mountains in Greece.

240. **What is he** ?—what manner of man is he ?

241. **Bears such an emphasis**—so mighty a stress laid upon it.

241-2. **Whose phrase.....stand**—whose utterance of sorrow has such magic power over the planets as to arrest their motion ; an allusion to the charms of witches who were supposed by them to be able to arrest the course of the moon and stars.

243. **Wonder-wounded**—paralysed by wonder.

247. **Splenitive**—given to sudden anger ; the spleen was of old supposed to be the seat of anger, hatred, malice.

249. **Which.....fear**—which it will be prudent in you to fear.

252. **Theme**—subject.

253. **Wag**—"the word had not the grotesque signification which it now has, and might be used without incongruity in the most serious passages".....(Cl. Pr. Edd.).

255. **Forty thousand**—used for an indefinite number.

256-7. **Could not.....sum**—could not, however great their love vie with me in loving her.

259. **Ferbear him**—do not attempt to touch him, for fear of the consequences.

260. **'Swounds**—by what acts are you prepared to show that love which you have professed in such boastful words ?

261. **Woo't**—according to Singer, a common contraction in the northern countries for wouldst thou : used, says Halliwell, in the western countries for will thee.

262. **Eisel**—the two most probable of the many explanations given of this word are (1) vinegar, (2) the name of some river ; the advocates of the name of a river cite the Yssel in Flanders, the Oesil in Denmark, and the Weisel or Vistula, or consider it identical with Ousel, the diminutive of Ouse, a common name of rivers in England and signifying a river or water. **Eat a crocodile**—the advocates for the name of a river claim that their view is supported by this expes-sion, which looks as if Hamlet were challenging Laertes to impossrble feats.

264. **To out face me**—to outdare me ; to put me to shamie by the extravagant professions of your love.

266. **Prate**—rant.

268. **Pate**—used in a ridiculous sense.

269. **Like a wart**—no bigger than a wart. **Mouth**—talk big.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

271. **A while.....him**—for a time his fit of madness will exercise its power over him.

273. **Golden couplets**—the dove generally sits upon two eggs, and the young birds when hatched are covered with a yellow down. **Disclosed**—by the breaking of the eggs.

274. **His.....drooping**—he will hang down his head in bashed silence.

277-8. **Let ...day**—*i. e.*, nature will take her own course whatever mighty obstacles we may put in its way ; it is no use my cavilling at this behaviour of Laertes ; 'a dog hath his day' was a proverbial phrase meaning that every dog will at one time or another have its good time.

279. **Wait upon him**—attend him to see that he does himself no injury.

280. **Strengthen..... speech**—let what we talked about last night encourage you to be patient awhile ; in, in the thought of.

281. **We'll put..... push**—we will without delay give the matter a decisive impulse, one that will bring things to a definite issue.

283. **This.....monument**—*i. e.*, Hamlet's life offered up by Laertes to his sister's memory shall be a more lasting monument in men's minds than any material one that could be built.

285. **In patience.....be**—let us act with patience and control.

ACT V

SCENE II

Summary of the Scene :

This is the last Scene of the tragedy. Some time is believed to have passed between this Scene and the preceding one. Hamlet recounts to Horatio what adventure he had had over the sea, how he broke the seal of the King's letter and changed its contents directing the king of England to execute Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as soon as they landed on the shores of England. Hamlet also expresses regret for unnecessarily quarrelling with Laertes who has every cause to feel aggrieved and offended. He expresses his willingness to make peace with him.

At this moment a young courtier named Osric comes to Hamlet and informs him that the king has arranged a friendly fencing match between him and Laertes. Osric gives details of the terms and conditions of the match and asks Hamlet whether he agress to accept the match. The match is to be fought immediately. Horatio smells some foul game in it and advises Hamlet not to accept the challenge. An uncertain feeling of impending danger comes over Hamlet also for a moment, but he refuses to pay any heed to it or even to Horatio's premonitions. He calms his friend with words showing his fatalistic belief in man's impotence against an all-powerful

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Digitized by eGangotri

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Providence. To meet what may now come with stoical composure seems to him his only task.

The scene now shifts to the fencing arena. The King, the Queen and all the courtiers have assembled to witness the match. The king has already provided Laertes, according to their plan, with a poisoned rapier. He has also kept a cup of poisonous drink ready for Hamlet.

The fencing match then commences. At the outset, Hamlet apologises to Laertes for killing Polonius and assures him that he did so in a fit of madness. Then begins the fight. Hamlet succeeds in securing first three hits over Laertes. The Queen in her great joy over Hamlet's performance drinks the cup of poisoned wine prepared and kept ready for Hamlet. In the mean time Laertes causes a scratch by the poisoned point of his rapier on Hamlet's person. This leads to a scuffle between the two, in the course of which their rapiers are exchanged and Hamlet hurts Laertes with his own poisoned rapier. The Queen falls down crying that she has been poisoned. The mystery is now clear to Hamlet. Laertes is himself dying. He reveals to Hamlet the treachery of the King and dies. Hamlet, himself nearing his end, wounds the king with the same poisoned rapier and also forcibly pours the remaining draught of the poisoned drink into the mouth of the King. Laertes and the King die immediately. Hamlet gives his parting message to Horatio and dies. According to the wishes of Hamlet, Fortinbras is made King of Denmark and Horatio takes upon himself the task of explaining the whole situation to his countrymen.

Critical Comments :

This is the grim scene of final catastrophe. All the important characters of the tragedy—the King, the Queen, Hamlet, Laertes —all die on the spot, giving the scene of action the appearance of a graveyard rather than a part of the Royal Palace. Hamlet's words spoken to Horatio and Laertes well fit in with the atmosphere of the closing scene. Hamlet's last words to Horatio sound like an admission that his heart has grown old, and that life holds nothing more of value for him. They have a ring of farewell about them. The King and Laertes at last have their meed for their treacherous role.

Notes :

1. **So much.....other**—enough of this matter : now I will show you how the other turned out.

2. **The circumstance**—all the details.

4. **Fighting**—struggle as to whether I should let matters take their course or should actively oppose it.

6. **Worse.....bilboes**—in a more miserable plight than that of the mutineers in chains : of the **Bilboes**—Steevens says, "This is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it by which mutinous or disorderly sailors anciently were linked together. The word is derived from

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS 2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Bilboa, a place in Spain.....The bilboes are still shown in the Tower of London among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada."

7-9. **And praised.....fall**—and I thank rashness for the impulse, for it is well we should recognize that our sudden and apparently unwise impulses often serve us well, when our deep plots come to nothing.

11. **Rough-hew.....will**—however clumsily we may begin to fashion them.

13. **My sea-gown.....me**—having hurriedly wrapped myself in my sea-gown. Singer quotes Cotgrave, "Esclarine.....a sea—gown or a coarse, high-collered, and short-sleeved gown reaching down to the mid-leg, and used mostly by sea-men and Saylors."

15. **Finger'd**—got hold of ; put my hand upon by lucky accident.

16. **Room**—cabin.

17. **My fears.....manners**—I in my fear thinking nothing as to whether I was acting honourably. **To unseal**—as to.

18. **Their grand commission**—the commission they were so proud of having entrusted to them.

20 **Larded**—garnished, tricked out.

21. **Importing.....too**—those reasons having to do with the well being of both the king of Denmark and the king of England ; the former because Hamlet's death was so necessary to him, the latter because of the vengeance the king of England would provoke by disobeying the commands sent him.

22. **With ho !.....life**—mentioning the terrible dangers which threatened so long as I was allowed to live ; **Bugs**—bugbears, terrors ; as frequently in Shakespeare.

23. **On the supervise**—immediately upon his reading it. **No leisure bated**—without any abatement of haste in the way of leisurely proceeding.

24. **Not to stay.....axe**—without so much as waiting till the axe could be sharpened.

30-1. **Ere..... .....play**—before I could think the scheme out in all its completeness, my brains were already at work upon its execution ; the prologue of a play necessarily involved a knowledge of its scheme, and sometimes declared what that scheme was. Some editors take **They** as referring to Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

32. **Wrote it fair**—wrote it out in a clerkly hand.

33. **Hold**—consider. **Statists**—statemen ; Blackstone says that most of the great men of Shakespeare's time whose autograps have been preserved, wrote very had hands : their secretaries very neat ones.

34. **A baseness**—a mark of low birth.

36. **Yeoman's services**—right trusty services ; the yeoman of old days were among the most serviceable of troops.

37. **Effect—purport.**

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

38. **Conjuration**—adjuration.

39. **As England..... .....tributary**—calling upon the king of England as being a faithful, etc.

40. **As love.....flourish**—according as he desired that their mutual love should flourish, etc. **The palm**—being an evergreen and hardy tree is used as a type of enduring freshness.

41. **As peace.....wear**—according as he wished that peace should abound between them. **Wheaten garland**—wheat being symbolical of peace and plenty.

42. **And stand.....amities**—and continue to be a connecting link of friendship between the two countries. Johnson remarks, "The comma is the note of connection and continuity of sentences : the period is the note of abruption and disjunction.

43. **As'es.....charge**—weighty provision ; "a quibble is intended between as the conditional particle and ass, the beast of burthen" (Johnson).

44. **On the view.....contents**—as soon as he should have made himself master of the contents.

45. **Without . ...less**—without any hesitation, consideration. however slight.

47. **Not.....allow'd**—without even allowing them to confess their sins to the priest and obtain absolution.

48. **Even.....ordinant**—even in that particular heaven had ordained matters to the same end ; the fact that I had my father's signet-ring in my purse shows it was heaven's will that things should go as they have gone.

50. **Model**—counterpart, copy. **That Danish seal**—with which their commission was sealed.

51. **The writ**—the mandate.

52. **Subscribed it**—affixed an imitation of the king's signature. **Impression**—sc. of the seal.

53. **Changeling**—usually meaning a child that had been substituted by fairies or witches for one carried off by them.

56. **Go to't**—*i.e.*, their destined death.

57. **They did.....employment**--their employment (which involved my death) was one eagerly sought by them to their death.

58. **They are.....conscience**—their fate does not trouble my conscience.

58-9. **Their defeat.....grow**—their destruction is due to their having insinuated themselves into the project for killing me.

60. **The baser nature**—those of inferior courage and address.

61-2. **Between.....opposites**—between the weapons of two mighty opponents (such as the king and myself) when they are thrusting at each other with most deadly purpose.

63. **Does it.....upon**—it is not imperative upon me.

65. **Popp'd in.....hopes**—suddenly thrust himself in between and my election to the throne, of which I had good hopes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

66-7. **Thrown out.....cozenage**—so cunningly fished for my death. **Proper**—own, my very life.

67-8. **Is't not.....arm** ?—am I not perfectly justified in paying him out with my own hand ?

68-0. **And is't not.....evil** ?—and would it not be a sin worthly of damnation to let this plague-spot upon human nature have further opportunities for evil ?

71-2. **It must.....there**—the king is certain to know very soon what is the result of his commission (and therefore there is no time to be lost in doing whatever you have determined to do).

73. **It will.....mine**—the time that will elapse before he knows the result will be short but that short interval is wholly mine there is nothing to baulk my vengeance.

74. **And a man's .....'one'**—and the taking of a man's life is as easy as to count one ; short as the interval is, his death is but the affair of a moment.

67. **Forgot myself**—allowed myself to behave with want of courtesy.

77. **Image**—reflection, semblance.

78. **Court his favours**—endeavour to win him to forgiveness and friendship.

79. **Bravery**—extravagant display.

82. **This water-fly**—this contemptible insect ; "a water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler" (Johnson).

84. **Thy state .....gracious**—you are all the better for not knowing him ; 'state of grace' was used in theological language for that state of a man's soul which had obtained Divine favour.

85-6. **Let a beast.....mess**—if a beast (like this fellow) only plenty of property, he shall eat at the king's table. **Crib**—manager, that from which stalled beasts feed. **Mess**—a dish of meat.....that which is set or placed on the table.

87. **Chough**—it is doubtful whether here a bird of the jackdaw genus is meant, Osric being compared to it on account of his chattering, or whether chough is only another spelling of **Chuff**—for a wealthy but ill mannered fellow. **Spacious .....dirt**—possessed of many abroad acre.

88. **Sweet**—"a common mode of address in the Elizabethan court language" (Mommeen).

90. **With all.....spirit**—with the greatest readiness ; in imitation of Osric's Jargon.

90-1. **Put.....head**—put your hat on your head, for which it is intended ; **Bonnet**—now used only for the headgear of women and Highlanders.

92. **It is very hot**—*i.e.*, it is on account of the heat that I carry it in my hand.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

94. **Indifferent cold**—fairly, moderately, cold.

95-6. **Hot.....complexion**—hot, as it seems to a man of my temperament. **Complexion**—was formerly used for both temperament and external appearance, as well as the colouring of the face, its only modern sense.

99. **On your head**—on you.

101. **Remember**—Hamlet was probably about to add 'your courtesy', a phrase used in bidding a man put on his hat, not put it off, as would be expected : cp. L. L. L. V. 1. 103, "I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy ; I beseech thee, apparel thy head.' How the phrase got that meaning has not been discovered : possibly it was originally used when a man had already been bidden to 'apparel his head', but out of humility had hesitated to do so, being thus guilty of a want of the truest courtesy.

102. **For mine ease**—I assure you I do it because I find it more comfortable ; the phrase was a common one in the ceremonious language of the period.

103. **Absolute**—perfect in all gentlemanly accomplishments.

104. **Excellent differences**—according to Delius, different excellences ; the Cl. Pr. Edd. explain, "distinctions marking him out from the rest of men", which seems to me more satisfactory.

104-5. **Of very.....showing**—of most refined manners and highbred courtesy. **Feelingly**—with a due appreciation of his merits.

106. **The card.....gentry**—the very guide-book of good breeding.

106-7. **You shall.....see**—you shall find him to contain in himself every accomplishment that one could wish to see.

In continent—in part there is a reference to geographical terms, you shall find in him the whole continent of which gentleman may wish to see a part ; with an allusion to the grand tour which in Shakespeare's day it was the custom for well-born young men to make on the continent.

108. **His definement.....you**—his description suffers nothing at your hand ; you describe him in full and adequate terms.

109-10 **To divide ...memory**—to specify one by one the innumerable particulars of his excellence would be an effect of arithmetic which would make memory giddy.

110-1. **And yet but.....sail**—the only explanation of this passage that seems at all satisfactory is given by Abbott, S 128. Remarking that 'neither' for our 'either' is in Shakespeare's manner, after native expressed or implied, and that the ellipsis of the negative explains. **Neither**—here he paraphrases. **But yaw Neither**—by "do nothing but leg clumsily behind neither." To yaw is properly to fall off or swerve from the curse laid ; and so from the vessel not being to go straight to the point, we may get the sense of lagging behind

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

But it seems to me that **In respect of his quick sail**—refer to **Memory**—(his-its) not to Laertes, and I would explain and yet as regards its quicking sailing (*i. e.*, however quick memory might sail), it would not be able to keep its course after him.' It is the speed of memory which is primarily referred to and though this infers the speed of that which it pursues, the idea is concerned more especially with the pursuer.

111. **In the.....extolment**—to praise him only according to his deserts.

112. **A soul.....article**—"one who, if virtues should be specified inventorially, would have many items in the list" (Schmidt).

112-3. **And his.....rareness**—and the qualities with which he has been endowed so scarce and rare; Hamlet speaks as though Laertes were a vial into which the finest essence had been pured.

113-4. **His semblable.....mirror**—his like could be seen only in a mirror of himself; cp. Tim. iv. 3·22, "His semble, yea, himself; Timon disdains"; and Theobald. The Double Falshood, "None but himself could be his parallel."

114-5. **And who.....more**—and anyone who should try to follow in his steps, imitate him, would be but as the shadow to the reality.

117-8. **The concernancy.....breath**—what is the object of all this talk? Why do we waste time in so ineffectually trying to describe him whom no words can describe?

120-1. **Is't not .....really**—Horatio banters Osric about his evident inability to understand Hamlet by saying 'is it possible to you to talk in a language other than your natural one, and yet impossible for you to understand in that other language? You will be able to do so, if you make the effort. This is nearly Moberly's explanation only that he takes. **In another tongue**—as on other tongue. Johnson would read 'in a mother tongue'; Staunton, 'in's mother tongue.'

122. **What imports.....gentlemen**—what was the object of mentioning that gentleman.

124-5. **His purse.....spent**—his verbal exchequer is already bankrupt; all his wealth of fine words is exhausted.

129. **It would.....me**—it would not be any great commendation.

131-3. **I dare . ...himself**—"I dare not pretend to know him lest I should pretend to an equality; no man can completely know another but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom" (Johnson).

134. **For his weapon**—as regards his skill in using his weapon.

134-5. **In the..... unfellowed**—in the opinion of people generally his merit has no fellow, equal. **Meed** for merit, as conversely merit is used for meed.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

136. **His weapon**—the weapon he specially affects.

138. **But, well**—but never mind, go on.

140. **Imponed**—staked ; Dyce supposed this to be Osric's affected pronunciation of 'impawned' ; more probably it is an affected coinage from Lat. imponere, to place upon.

141. **Assings**—belongings, accompaniments.

142. **Hangers**—"under this term were comprehended four graduated starps by which the sword was attached to the girdle. **Carriages**—the hangers, as he afterwards explains.

143. **Dear to fancy**—artistic in their character. **Very.....hilts**—thoroughly in keeping with the hilts.

144. **Liberal conceit**—"elaborate design" (Cl. Pr. Edd.)

146-7. **I knew..... done**—I knew that a commentary would be necessary before the whole description could be understood. **Margent**—the only form used by Shakespeare. Furness points out that in old books explanatory comments were printed in the margin. Cp. R. j. i. 3. 86, "And what obscured in this fair volume lies. Find written in the margent of his eyes."

149. **German**—akin, relative fully akin, said of brothers and sisters having the same parents.

150-1. **I would.....then**—till we take to carrying cannon at our sides, I should prefer the word 'hangers'.

156-7. **He shall . .....nine**—A 'pass', in fencing, is usually a single thrust ; here the word seems equivalent to bout, rally exchange of passes, while Laertes wagers that the ratio will not be more than twelve to ten, *i. e.* will not exceed Hamlet's hits by three.

157-8. **And it.....answer**—and the matter might be settled at once if you would condescend to meet him in combat.

163. **The breathing.....me**—the time at which I usually take my exercise.

164. **The gentleman willing**—if the gentleman be willing.

165. **Will gain**—on the use of will when we should use shall, see Abb. S 319.

167. **Re-deliver you**—return this as your answer.

168. **After..... will**—so long as you give that as my answer in effect, I don't care in what affected language you give it.

170. **I commend.....lordship**—I humbly offer my services, etc. ; a complimentary form of taking leave.

171. **Yours, yours**—said impatiently, your humble servant to command.

172-3. **There are.....turn**—there are no other tongues than his own that would serve his turn in that matter, sc. in commending him.

174-5. **This lapwing.....head**—this fellow is off on his errand to tell the king of his success in as great a hurry as the lapwing, who when hatched is said to be in such a hurry to see the world that it runs off with part of its shell adhering to it.

CC-0 Agamdigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

176. **He did.....it**—he is such a born courtier that we may be sure that he excused himself to his mother's breast before he sucked it for the liberty he was about to take. Caldecott compares Fulwel's Arte of Flatterie, 1579, "Flatterie hath taken such habit in man's affections, that it is in moste men altera natura ; yea, the very sucking babes hath a kind of adulation towards their nurses for the dugge. **Comply**—be ceremonious, formal.

177. **Bevy**—brood, flock ; the word was especially used of larks and quails ; and as Grant White observes is a more characteristic classification of Osric, who has just been called a lapwing, than the quarto reading, breed.

178. **The drossy age**—this age which is the mere scum of better days.

178-9. **Got the tune.....encounter**—caught the note of the times and learnt that veneer of courtesy which is now so much admired.

179-81. **A kind opinions**—a kind of frothy, talk, gathered here and there, which carries them safe through even the most carefully sifted opinions, *i. e.*, which makes them look like good grain even to those who most carefully sift their opinions before adopting them. **Fanned**—is Warburton's emendation for fond, which foolish and the wisest opinions, or 'alike through the most fondly cherished and the most choice opinions.' Nicholson conjectures vinewed, *i. e.*, musty mouldy.

181. **And do.....out**—and yet you have only to test the by blowing, and the bubbles burst in a moment : the figure of winnowing seems to be carried on in. **Blow**—while at the same time it is mixed up with that of blowing soap bubbles.

183-5. **Commended.....hall**—young Osric, by whom the king sent you his message, brings back word that you are awaiting him in the hall. **To play with**—to fence with : to play was a technical term in fencing, and to 'play a prize' was to contend for prizes in a competition in which degrees of Master. Provost, and Scholar, were conferred for proficiency in the art.

186. **Will.....time**—wish to put off the meeting till you have had further time for practice.

187-8. **They follow.....pleasure**—my inclinations attend upon the king's will in the matter.

188. **If.....ready**—if the time seems to him a fitting one, I am ready.

189. **So able**—in as good condition for the contest.

191. **In happy time**—they come at the right moment, *i. e.*, I am glad to see them ; the French, ala bonne heure.

192. **Gentle entertainment**—conciliatory manner and speech.

197. **At the odds**—with the odds that have been allowed me.

198. **Thou.....think**—you can have no idea.

201. **Foolery**—a mere silly feeling. **Gain-giving**—misgiving.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

203. **Obey**—it, sc. the prompting of your heart. **Forestal**—anticipate, and so prevent.

204. **Repair**—coming.

205. **We defy augury**—I pay no heed to presentiments.

206-8. **If it be.....will come**—if one's fate is to come now there will be nothing to fear in the future ; if it be not awaiting one in the future, it will come now. **If it does bit cine biw**—it will come sooner or later. **The readiness is all**—everything depends upon being ready to go when death summons.

208-9. **Since no man.....betimes**—since no man can carry nothing out, which is part of the Rurial Service in the Church of England.

210. **Take.....me**—let me make friends between you by placing his hand in yours.

212. **As you are a gentleman**—as gentleman like you should.

213. **This presence**—all this noble company ; used in this phrase of persons of high rank.

214. **Punish'd**—afflicted.

216-7. **That might.....awake**—that was calculated to exasperate your natural feelings, your instincts of honour, and your resentment of discourtesy.

219. **If Hamlet.....away**—if the real Hamlet, the genuine nature of the man, be absent from himself.

221. **Denies it**—abjures it as his own action.

223. **Is of the faction**—is among those who are, etc.

226-9. **Let my .....brother**—let my disavowal of having intentionally done you wrong so far obtain pardon of your natural nobility of heart as to make it understand that in shooting my arrow over the house, I have by my carelessness wounded one as dear to me as a brother ; **O'er the house**—as a boy might do, though nothing was farther from his thoughts than that of wounding any one about it.

229. **In nature**—so far as my natural feelings are concerned.

230-1. **Whose motive.....revenge**—though in this case those natural feelings would strongly incite me to demand revenge.

231. **In my.....honour**—in the matter of my honour.

232. **I stand aloof**—I hold myself at a distance from you, am not ready to accept your apology. **Will no reconcilement**—refuse all reconciliation.

233. **Some elder masters**—some 'past masters' in the etiquette of such matters.

234. **I have.....peace**—I receive an authoritative opinion based upon precedents in such matters, that I may make peace with you.

235. **Ungored**—unwounded by the sarcasms of these who would otherwise twit me with having been glad to shirk the combat.

CC-0 Agamdam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

235-6. **But.....love**—but for the meantime I accept your proffer of love as being what it professes to be.

237. **Wrong it**—sc. by doubting it. **I embrace-it freely**—I readily take you at your word.

238. **And will.....play**—and will with all the openness of friendship engage with you in this brotherly combat.

240-2. **I'll be.....indeed**—I'll act as your foil, my ignorance setting your skill, as the darkness of night sets off the brilliancy of a star : Hamlet takes up the word foil and uses it in the sense of the tinsel placed under gems in rings, etc. to add to their brilliancy. **Stick fiery off**—stand out with additional brilliancy from the contrast.

246. **Your grace..... side**—your grace by wagering on the weaker side has laid the odds. The less skilful combatant may be said to have laid the odds, instead of taking them (notwithstanding that Laertes was in order to win, to hit Hamlet twelve times to his nin), if Hamlet, who knew the terms of the wager, means that the points to be conceded by Laertes were not sufficient to put them on an equality. But 'laid the odds' may mean nothing more than 'wagered'. It is very improbable in view of the meaning in which the word is used in. 248', and throughout, that **Odds**—should here refer to the greater value of the king's stake ; and Bitson's calculation that the value of the six Barbary horses as compared with the rapiers, etc., was as twenty to one, must be an imaginary one.

248. **But since.....odds**—but since he is your superior in fencing we have received odds as to the numbers of this in order to make the wager an equal one.

250. **Have all a length**—are all of one length.

254. **Or quit.....exchange**—or, at the third exchange of passes, should requite him by delivering a hit.

255. **Ordnance**—cannon ; "the same word as ordinance, which is the old spelling.....It originally meant the bore or size of the cannon, and was thence transferred to the cannon itself." (Skeat, Ety. Diet).

256. **Drink.....breath**—drink to him as wishing him breath to last out the combat.

257. **An union**—"Mr. King Natural Hist. of precious Stones, says ; 'As no two pearls were ever found exactly alike this circumstance gave origin to the name "unio" (unique). But in Low Let "Margarite (um)", and "perla" became a generic name "unio" being restricted to fine spherical specimens" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

260. **Kettle**—kettledrum. **Speak**—give the signal.

262. **The heavens to earth**—*i. e.* by re-echoing the sound to the earth.

264. **Vary**—watchful, so as to make no mistake about the hits.

265. **Judgement**—*i. e.* I call upon the umpire to decide.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

267. **This pearl is thine**—"under the pretence of throwing a 'pearl' into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine"... (Steevens).

371. **A touch**—a touch, but so slight as not to count for a hit.

272. **Shall**—is certain to.

273. **Napkin**—handkerchief ; the ordinary sense of the word in those days.

278. **By and by**—presently. **Dare not**—*i. e.* because it would excite him too much.

281. **And yet.....conscience**—sc. to do so with my poisoned rapier.

282. **Dally**—are but playing with me ; are not in earnest in your attempts to hit me.

284. **Afeard.....me**—treat me as something too delicate, tender, to be made the mark of your skill.

286. **Neither**—we should now say 'either'.

287. **Have at you now** !—Laertes, now really irritated at being foiled, is determined to use all his skill. Stage Direction. **Scuffling**—how the exchange of rapiers takes place is much diputed.

287. **They are incensed**—their blood is up, and they will now, if not stopped, fight in real earnest.

288. **Come again**—return to the struggle.

291. **As a springe**—"This bird (the woodcock is trained to decoy other birds, and sometimes, while strutting uncautiously too near the springe, it becomes itself entangled."

292. **With**—by as a result of.

293. **She sounds.....bleed**—she swoons, faints, at the sight of their blood.

302. **The foul practice**—my treacherous plot.

311. **The union**—the pearl you spoke of ; perhaps with a play upon the word in its ordinary sense in reference to his union in death with the queen.

312. **He.....served**—the retribution that has fallen upon him is a just one.

313. **Temper'd**—compounded.

316. **Mine..... thee**—may not the guilt of my death and my father's rest upon you !

319. **Chance**—mischance.

320. **That are.....set**—who have had no part in this catastrophe, but are only as dumb spectators at a play.

321-2. **As this.....arrest**—which I have not for this cruel serjeant, death allows neither escape nor delay when he has once laid his hand upon your shoulder.

324-5. **Report.....unsatisfied**—explain to those who shall blame my action what good cause I had for it ; it sc. that I will outlive you.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

326. **An antique Roman**—one who, like the Romans of old, would choose death rather than a life which would be a disgrace, *i. e.* in surviving so noble a friend.

330. **Things.....me**—unless the real facts are made known, my name will live behind me stained with guilt.

332. **Absent.....awhile**—forgo for a time the joys of heaven.

336-7. **Gives.....volley**—fires this salute.

338. **O'ercrows**—triumphs over ; as a cock crows over a beaten antagonist.

340. **The election lights**—the choice of king will fall.

342-3. **With the...solicited**—together with the events, great and small, which have incited me to what I have done.

345. **And flights...rest**—and may angels accompany your soul in its flight to heaven, and etc.

348. **Cease your search**—*i. e.* you need not go further, for woe and subject of wonder are present here in abundance.

349. **This.....havoc**—"this pile of corpses urges to merciless slaughter where no quarter is given".....(Cl. Pr. Edd.).

350. **Is toward**—is in preparation.

351. **At a shot**—with one shot.

353. **Our affairs**—the narration of what occurred in England in the embassy.

355. **To tell**—in telling.

357. **Where.....thanks** ?—by whom may we expect to be thanked for our trouble ? **His**—the king's.

360. **Jump**—so exactly at the moment. **Bloody question**—bloody occurrences.

362. **Give order**—said to one of the attendants.

363. **Stage**—raised platform.

366. **Carnal**—referring to the marriage of the king and queen.

367. **Of accidental.....slaughters**—sc. Polonius's death.

368. **Of deaths.....cause**—of deaths instigated by, and so resulting from cunning and the force of circumstances ; the cunning was that which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern employed at the king's bidding to bring about Hamlet's death ; the **Forced cause**—the circumstances in which Hamlet was thus placed, and which forced him to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their death.

369. **Upshot**—conclusion. **Purpose mistook**—plots clumsily executed, as in the murder of Hamlet.

370. **Fall'n.....heads**—recoiling upon their inventors.

371. **Deliver**—narrate.

373. **Embrace my fortune**—*i. e.* accession to the throne.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

374-5. **I have.....me**—I have some rights in this kingdom which still live in the remembrance of men, and which the circumstances so favourable to my claim bid me assert.

377. **And from.....more**—and the words I shall have to speak will come from him (sc. Hamlet) whose wish thus signified will find an echo in the voices of others.

378. **This same**—*i.e.* the placing of the bodies on the raised plat-form. **Presently**—without delay.

379-80. **Even.....happen**—without waiting for men's minds to grow calm, lest in the interval, while they are still excited, other calamities, due to intention or mistake, be added to the present ones.

382. **Had he.....on**—had circumstances occurred to prompt him to action.

383. **To have.....royally**—to have shown himself worthy of his royal descent.

384. **Rites of war**—the firing of cannon, etc.

387. **Becomes the field**—is suitable to the field of battle.

Predman Krishen Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

EXPLANATIONS OF IMPORTANT PASSAGES

Explanation. Act I. Sc. 1. Lines 70—79

Why this same strict.....joint labourer with the day—These lines occur in scene I of the first Act in the play *Hamlet*. The words are spoken by Marcellus to Horatio.

Marcellus notices certain preparations for war of battle, which he does not understand, and that is why he enquires from Horatio the cause of all such preparation. Marcellus says that there is a strict vigil all over the State of Denmark ; there is a busy effort for the manufacture and collection of gunpowder from the State as well as from other countries ; the ship-builders are busy all the days in the work and all the hours in the day and in the night so that there is no distinction between Sunday and other days of the week or between day time and night time. Marcellus wants to know the reasons behind all these busy activities.

N. B. We have shown only in the above passage how to explain the reference to the context but in all other succeeding passages we shall simply explain the lines without explaining the reference to the context. Our students should take the hint from the above passage how to explain with reference to the context.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 1. Lines 86—92

Who by a sealed compact..... had he been vanquisher—Here Horatio is explaining to Marcellus the cause behind the heavy preperations for war. Horatio says that Fortinbras of Norway once challenged the King of Denmark to a duel. The conditions of the duel were that whoever happened to lose the duel would not only lose his life but also some portion of his land. These conditions were duly sanctioned by law and by all the rules of duel fighting. Now the Fortinbras of Norway lost the duel : he lost his life as well as a portion of his land to the King of Denmark, because the King of Denmark won the duel otherwise he would have lost his life and also a portion of his land as laid down in the contract of the duel.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 1. Lines 93—104

By the some covenant.....so by his father lost—Horatio explains to Marcellus that old Fortinbras of Norway lost the duel against the King of Denmark, and naturally, he lost his life as well as a portion of his property to the King of Denmark. But then, young Fortinbras of Norway now wants to recover those lands from King

CC-0. Panjab Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of Denmark by force. That is why, he has collected from the outskirts of Norway a few young people who are not all trained soldiers and who have been tempted only by money and adventure. Of course, such an undertaking on the part of young Fortinbras is indeed an act of unusual daring as compared with the mighty strength and resources of Denmark.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 1. Lines 112—125 **(Imp.)**

A mote it is.....climatures and countrymen—When Bernardo says that the appearance of the ghost of the King of Denmark may have to do something with the coming war between Norway and Denmark, Horatio says that the ghost is like a mote or particle of dust in the sunbeams, because it is as shadowy as the ghost but then, it is a troublesome thing just like a particle of dust when it gets into the eye. Horatio then quotes the occasion of the time just before the murder of Julius Caesar when many unnatural events or incidents took place, for example, the tombs opened wide and the dead bodies come out of them and began to walk and chatter in the open streets of Rome ; meteors shot through the sky ; the sky rained drops of blood ; there were explosions in the sun ; the moon which controls the tides in the ocean seemed to be completely darkened as if the world had reached the day of its extinction ; and many other such incidents which serve as the warning of some great calamity to the earth as well as to the sky. Similarly, the ghost may be also one of such evil signs which indicates some great calamity or disturbance in the State of Denmark.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 1. Lines 150—157

I have heard the cock.....made probation—Horatio explains to Bernardo why the ghost disappeared at the crowing of the cock. He says that the cock is the herald of the morning because by its crowing the night breaks into day. And as soon as the cock crows, wherever the spirits or ghosts may be in land or air or in water or fire, they must hurry back to their home ; and that is why the ghost of the King of Denmark disappeared at the crowing of the cock proving thereby the truth of the fact.

Students should here know how Shakespeare reflects the superstition of his time in his plays. He has already in the previous passage illustrated the common superstition that on the eve of the death of some king or emperor many unnatural things happen ; similarly he has proved in the present passage how people believe that with the cock crowing, all ghosts, all spirits must disappear and return to their underworld wherever they may be, wandering in land or in water or in the air.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 1. Lines 158—163

Some say that ever against.....gracious is the time—Marcellus says that at the time of the birth of Christ the cock crew the whole night till the morning, and therefore, no evil spirit could move about on this night, and hence the night was perfectly safe against any kind of harmful influence ; none of the heavenly bodies collided ; no fairy

CC-0 Agartala Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

could play any mischief nor any witch or evil spirit could do any injury to anybody ; naturally, therefore, the time of the birth of Christ was so safe, peaceful and free from any kind of disturbance or harm from any corner.

This is also another illustration of human superstition which was prevalent strongly during Shakespeare's time and which may be prevalent even now-a-days in the orthodox Christian world.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 1—13

Though yet of Hamlet.....taken to wife—Claudius is here addressing his officers and other subordinates in order to announce his coronation as the King of Denmark after the death (murder) of his elder brother, the former King of Denmark. He says to them that although at this moment they and all else should mourn over the death of the King of Denmark yet out of due consideration of the welfare of the State, he has decided to take the reins of the government and also accept the deceased king's wife (Gertrude) as the Queen of Denmark or rather as his wife. He further explains his conduct on this occasion as a mixture of joy and sorrow because by his marriage with the dead king's wife she is becoming the Queen of Denmark on the one hand, while on the other hand, because of the death of the former king of Denmark Claudius is feeling sad at heart and more so, because he has to step into the shoes of his elder brother as the King of Denmark.

The above words partly reveal the character of Claudius. What a shamefaced creature he must be particularly because it is he who poisoned his brother with his own hand, because it is he who is making an incestuous marriage with his own brother's wife. It is the nature of all villains like Claudius to smile and yet be villains. Here Claudius is pretending to be sorrowful but in reality he is most joyous at heart.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 47—49

The head is not more.....to thy father—Claudius enquires of Laertes what favour he would like to have from him, and then, he says that even the head and the heart or the hand and the mouth are not so closely related as Polonius (Laertes' father) is related to Claudius ; and hence, Leartes has got every right to demand any favour from Claudius which will be most readily and gladly granted to him. This is another glaring instance of the hypocrisy of Claudius.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 77—86

Seems, madam ! nay, it is.....the suits of woe—Claudius says that if death is such a common thing why should the death of Hamlet's father appear (seem) to be such an uncommon or serious affair ? Hamlet says in reply most emphatically that the death of his father is not a common affair ; on the contrary whatever expression of mourning he may be putting at present but his black ribbon or his tears or his sighs may not be so real as the wound he is suffering in his heart or hearts on account of the death of his father,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

because so far tears, sighs, black dress or ribbon as a mark of mourning are concerned they may be mere pretensions or appearances but so far as Hamlet's own grief on account of his father's sudden death is concerned, it is most real and unforgettable, and no outward or artificial thing can express his grief. Hamlet means to say that his sorrow for the death of his father is most real while all else about him may be pretension or something unreal.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 92—100 **(Imp.)**

But to presevere.....take to heart—Claudius says to Hamlet that to mourn for one's father for sometime may be a good thing but to brood over his death constantly is not a mark of manliness ; it rather a mark of one's obstinacy : it is further a sign of the heart that does not submit to the will of God ; it is the mark of a person who always grudges and grumbles and is not content with the dispensation of God because death is a misfortune which is beyond human control and which is the decree of God ; and as such, it must be endured ; therefore, any person showing any unusual grief on account of the death of any near and dear one must be a creature who has no experience of the world, who has not been disciplined and who as such must be foolish to complain against Fate which is inevitable, unchar geable and irrevocable. Claudius further tells Hamlet that when everything in this universe is perishable, that is, when everything, great or small is bound to die some day or other, why should one grieve for the loss of one's father ?

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 101—105

Fie ! it is a fault to heaven.....this must be so—Claudius says to Hamlet that it is a shameful thing to mourn for one's father or mother or any such near and dear one, because when it is the will or decree of God or when it is the law of nature or when it is the universal order that everything must perish or die why should anybody mourn ? By such mourning one actually insults God, Nature and oneself, because the same law of birth, decay and death governs the whole universe. If one mourns over the death of any body it means that one protests against the law of God who is the dispenser of all things.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 112—128

This gentle and unforced accord.....earthly thunder—When Hamlet on the request of his mother agrees to stay in Denmark and not go to Wittenberg, Claudius feels very much pleased and says that in honour of Hamlet's obedience to his mother's wish to stay with her Claudius will drink for his health in such a ceremonious manner *i.e.*, with so much pomp and show that on other occasion the King of Denmark had drunk anybody's health so heartily and so loudly by the report of the guns which will announce the drinking of Hamlet's health. What a height of hypocrisy on the part of Claudius ? Of course, the real intention of Claudius to detain Hamlet in Denmark is to keep strict watch over him.

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 129—137

O, that this too solid.....possess it merely—This is the first soiloquy of Hamlet. Hamlet is very much disgusted with life particularly because of the treachery of his uncle and no less with the unfaithfulness or infidelity of his mother. That is why, he says that the human body seems to be rather too solid or too tough to be dissolved or destroyed, otherwise he would like to put an end to his life by committing suicide which unfortunately he can not do for fear of earning the curse of God who forbids everybody to take his life with his own hand. That is why the whole world all the more appears to be a very dull and miserable place in which there are only wicked persons and evil things that ruin the lives and the happiness of the good people by their villainy and treachery as Hamlet's life has been made miserable by the perfidy and infidelity of his own uncle and his own mother. Hamlet is now convinced that in this world noth.ng good grows but on the contrary the evil things flourish and prosper. Of course, here, Hamlet talks like a jaundiced person. He looks upon the world as a wretched place simply because he has got nothing but bitter experiences which have completely coloured his vision and thinking.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 146—153

Frailty, thy name is woman.....Hercules—Hamlet is speaking within himself while he is thinking of the infidelity of his mother to her husband because she has married the murderer of her husband. He says that all women are faithless because otherwise how could his mother within one month of the death of her husband marry the murderer of her husband *i. e.*, Hamlet's father ? Hamlet further says thet even the animals in the wilderness probably have a better sense of decency but human beings, particularly women, have no sense of decency because otherwise how can a woman marry within one month of her widowhood ? It is significant that in the above lines Shakespeare regards all women as faithless, and elsewhere in a sonnet he says that man are always deceivers or faithless creatures. But to speak the truth, in our opinion, both men and women are faithless in the affairs of their heart, the only difference being that men can be more easily tempted than women but when once women are tempted they can go down deeper into faithlessness and treachery than men.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 2. Lines 180—184

Thrift, thrift, Horatio.....my father—Hamlet says to his friend Horatio that his mother Gertrude had an indecent hurry in marrying the murderer of her husband because before her husband's funeral ceremony was hardly over her marriage with Claudius was celebrated, or rather some of the dishes which were served at the funeral table were served also at the marriage dinner which means that very little time had passed between the death of her husband and her marriage with her husband's brother. Hamlet further says

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

in fits of sorrow that he should have seen Claudius dead before he had seen the marriage of his mother with him (Claudius).

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 5—9

For Hamlet and the trifling.....no more—Laertes warns his sister Ophelia that she should regard Hamlet's love for her as a passing fancy as is natural to a young, undeveloped and inexperienced person, and not as a permanent sentiment because love of such a youth is not a serious affair but a trifling thing, and as such it is short-lived like the sweet scent of a flower that just blossoms and dies soon with the decay of the flower. This is to some extent true but all love does not decay so soon as Laertes fears : some love stays permanently as we find in the case of Hamlet's love otherwise at the end of the play Hamlet would challenge Leartes in the grave of Ophelia that there cannot be anybody else in the world who can love Ophelia more than Hamlet himself.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 10—14

For nature, crescent..... grows wide withal—Laertes is talking here of human nature, and particularly, of the nature of Hamlet. He says that with the advance of age human nature grows and changes and therefore, with the advance of years, Hamlet's love for Ophelia must also suffer some change. It is true in most cases but not in the case of Hamlet as we find his love for Ophelia in the last scene of the play.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 11—24

And now no soil nor cantel..... he is the head—Laertes says to Ophelia that at present Hamlet's age being tender, his heart is likely to be pure, and his love also may be quite sincere ; but when he grows up or rather becomes the King of Denmark his mind and heart are likely to change. And besides, being the King, his will will not be so free as when he is the Prince because the King is bound down by certain laws according to which he has to marry. A king cannot marry any and every woman ; he must marry a woman belonging to some royal family ; and therefore, Hamlet, when he would be King, would not be permitted to marry Ophelia because she does not belong to any royal family. A king cannot do anything or everything whatever he likes ; he has to consider the welfare of his State of or his subject before he takes any measure in any affair, and particularly, in marriage. A king cannot behave like an ordinary person who can marry any and every woman and who can also act according to his own free will or fancy because he has not to consider the will or welfare of any body else in the world. Therefore, according to Laertes, a king is less free than an ordinary individual, and naturally, his love or marriage must be more restricted.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 38—45 **(Imp.)**

The chariest maid..... .....though none else near—Laertes tells Ophelia that the modesty of a young woman has to be protected

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

very carefully ; it can be sullied or tainted even if it is exposed to the moon because even the moon that looks so cool and beautiful has also got its dark spots which may stain a woman's modesty. Laertes further says that even the most virtuous person may earn a bad name just as in the bud of a flower there may be a canker or insect which eats into its vitals and ruins it completely. Similarly, in early youth when the heart is pure, one may catch an evil infection just as in the early morning air or dew there may be some infection. Therefore, one should be very cautious and particularly, when one is exposed to the company of another youth. Last of all, Laertes says that even when a young woman remains all alone she runs the risk of being tempted by evil thoughts, while in the company of a young man she is likely to be tempted far more. Youth rebels to itself when it indulges in self-abuse as many of the young men and women without finding any out let of their love or passion indulge in all sorts of self-abuse.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 47—51

Do not, as some ungracious pastors . ....own rode—Ophelia after having listened to the sermons from Laertes rightly warns him against the pitfalls of youth. She says that there are many priests who preach moral maxims to others but who never follow these maxims in their own life. These priests show to others the road to heaven which is indeed most difficult to tread while they themselves follow the path of pleasures. Ophelia rightly compares her brother Laertes with an ungenerous and selfish moral priest who preaches virtues to others but who follows or practises vices in his own life. Laertes studies in the city of Paris which is the home of comforts, and luxuries and which is also the den of all sorts of temptations of sex-indulgence, while Ophelia stays in Denmark with her father ; and therefore, who is more exposed to temptations and who should be more careful ? Not surely Ophelia but Laertes. Students should note here that both Polonius and Laertes preach too much of moral maxims and give too much of warning to Ophelia against Hamlet's love for her ; and naturally Ophelia grows suspicious and also considerably frigid or cold in her respones to Hamlet, which finally results in the complete break down of the two young souls—insanity in the case of Ophelia and pessimism and cynicism in the case of Hamlet. Shakespeare wants to point out through the character of Polonius and Laertes that there are many such priests like the father and the son who instead of doing good to the world do a lot of harm ; and that is why, probably, both the father and the son suffer in their life—one is killed by Hamlet accidentally, while the other is also killed accidentally by Hamlet with the same poisoned sword which was designed by Claudius to kill Hamlet.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 60—80 **(Imp.)**

Give thy thoughts no tongue.....be false to any man—Polonius on the eve of his son's departure to France gives some pieces of advice for guarding his person and character, and also honour, against all

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

possible risks. Polonius warns Laertes not to express his opinion very freely or to act thoughtlessly. He advises his son to mix with people but not to make himself cheap. He advises him further that he should first of all test the sincerity and honesty of persons before he makes friends with them, and when he has found them true he should stick to them most faithfully. He warns Laertes at the same time that he must not entertain any and every one of his chance acquaintances and waste his money. He warns him to avoid picking up quarrels with any body unnecessarily but once he is involved in a quarrel in which he thinks he is justified, he must defend his honour and also let his enemy or opponent feel that he is much superior to him so that in future he may not trouble him any further. Polonius then advises Laertes to listen to every body but not to speak to every body, to accept criticism from every body but not risk his own criticism of any body, because such criticism creates enmity with people unnecessarily. Polonius then advises Laertes to put on decent and respectable dress which may lend dignity and status to his personality but not to wear any costly, showy or fashionable dress because it gives the impression of ill-breeding and also it is unnecessary waste of money which is foolish. France, in the opinion of Polonius, is the home of fashions and manners, and therefore, one should be very judicious in imitating the correct fashions and manners. Next, he advises his son neither to borrow money from any body nor to lend money to any body because both borrowing and lending ruin the good relationship between friends. Last of all, Polonius advises Leartes to be truthful, honest and sincere to himself, and it is only then, he cannot be false to any body, or in other words, if one is honest in his own thought and action, he would naturally be equally honest in his dealings with others. The words of advice given by Polonius to Laertes are probably the best in the world, and therefore, students should try to practise these rules of conduct in their own life.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 115—120

Ay springs to catch woodcocks.....for fire,—When Ophelia assures her father Polonius that Hamlet has made great vows of love in her favour, Polonius at once warns her that these vows are mere temptations to capture a woman's heart and then to ruin her. Polonius explains how in the prime of youth one is loud in his protestations of love but then such professions of love should be taken more as momentary or impulsive flashes of one's passing fancy or love and not as marks of any permanent or genuine sentiment of the heart. This is very true.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 3. Lines 127—131

Do not believe his vows . .....the better to beguile—Polonius warns Ophelia not to trust any of the offers of love from Hamlet because in his opinion, these offers are nothing but temptations to seduce her for vulgar enjoyment and not for holy union or marriage just as in the business market the businessmen

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

often tell lies while making business proposals to others with a view to swindle them. We know in the modern world how many people float bogus companies and then collect shares of lakhs of rupees and then cheat the shareholders or just as salesmen falsely praise their articles and deceive the buyers.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 4. Lines 17—36

This heavy-headed revel.....to his own scandal—When Horatio enquires about the loud report of trumpets and drums from the king's palace Hamlet explains to him that it is all on the occasion of the King drinking the health of the people ; but then, this ceremony of public drinking, in the opinion of Hamlet, has earned a bad name for the State of Denmark, because the people of Denmark have been branded by the outside world *i. e.*, foreign countries as a race of drunkards although the people of Denmark have made many proud achievements and also have attained great glories in many fields just as in the case of certain individuals some great vice or defect of character altogether ruin their life and career and put a bad name upon them for no fault of theirs because these defects are inherent and not acquired, and as such they are beyond human control. Hamlet further says that just as one particular defect in a man's character outweighs all other virtues in him so also the drinking habit of the Danes has spoilt their character and has earned a bad name for them abroad everywhere. To give a more common illustration, we know how a single lemon juice curdles a ton of pure milk ; similarly, a single defect or vice in a person spoils his life and career and brands him as a bad man in the eyes of the world.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 5. Lines 53—57

But virtue as it never ill.....prey on garbage—The ghost of Hamlet's father is speaking to Hamlet. The ghost says that a virtuous person cannot be tempted even if the temptation is offered in the most attractive form. Similarly, vulgar passion even if it is associated with a noble appearance can not but hanker after vulgar and mean desires. The sum and substance of the Ghost's words is that although Claudius may tempt Gertrude put on the crown of Denmark *i. e.* as the King of Denmark yet he can really degrade her if she is really virtuous, loving and faithful to her husband. In the same way, if Gertrude is really corrupt and degraded at heart, she will never be able to appreciate noble things of married life and love with all her association with the most pious or virtuous person as her husband. Hamlet's father has got an unduly good notion about Gertrude, and that is why, he puts the whole blame upon Claudius as if incestuous or any kind of marriage can take place without the full consent of both the man and woman.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 5. Lines 63—73

And in the porches of my ears . .....all my smooth body—The Ghost of Hamlet relates to Hamlet how when he was sleeping in the garden in the afternoon, Claudius came stealthily and poured into his

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by KS Mon-E-2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ears the poisonous juice of Hebona plant. This poisonous juice is so much injurious to human blood that it atonce curdles the blood in all the veins and arteries, and also it produces some kind of ulcer all over the skin so that the skin looks scaly, hideous and most repulsive. That is exactly what happened to the body and the skin of Hamlet's father when Claudius gave him the juice of Hebona.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 5. Lines 76—79

Thus was I sleeping.....imperfections on my head—The Ghost of Hamlet's father says to Hamlet that while he was sleeping in his garden he was poisoned to death by Claudius who robbed him not only of his life, kingdom and even his wife but also of the opportunity of repenting and making amends for the sins that Hamlet's father might have committed in his youth. The Ghost means to say further that his death was so unnatural, so sudden, that no religious ceremony could be performed for the purification of his body or soul : and he could not get the chance of even praying to God or asking for His forgiveness for whatever crimes or sins he might have committed in his life.

Explanation. Act 1. Sc. 5. Lines 98—104

Yea, from the table of my memory...with baser matter—Hamlet assures the Ghost of his father that he will never forget what he has told him and what he has asked him to do. Hamlet goes to the extent of assuring the Ghost that he will wipe out from his brain all other considerations, whatever might have been impressed upon his brain, and cherish in their place his desire, his advice as the most imperative command.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 1. Lines 63—67

Your bait of falsehood.....shall you my son—Polonius says to Reynaldo, his servant, that by telling a few lies about the character of Laertes to some of his friends and acquaintance he would be able to come to know the truth about the behaviour, character and ways of living of Laertes in France whether he has gone wrong or is going right. This is how all elderly guardians of young children collect informations about the ways, the behaviour and character of their children whom they send abroad for studies. Students must have noted the kind of lies Reynaldo is instructed to tell the friends and associates of Laertes in order to draw out from than the real secrets about the character and conduct of Laertes in France. They are indeed very shrewd lies and are intended to work upon the agents of information psychologically so that the truth may come out. This shows how shrewd Polonius is, but then, his ways are mean and no honourable father should collect informations about his son in this manner.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 1. Lines 102—106

This is the very ecstasy of love.....afflict our natures—Polonius says to his daughter Ophelia, after having heard from her about Hamlet's approach to her and also about his farewell from

CC-0. Panjab Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh. Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

her, that Hamlet's ways clearly indicate that he is madly in love with Ophelia. Polonius says further that whenever any strong passion happens to take hold of a person as love has taken hold of Hamlet, it completely turns him mad and makes him behave in the very same manner as Hamlet has behaved towards Ophelia. Students must have noted that all the reading of Polonius about the character of Hamlet are entirely wrong. Polonius is possessed by the idea that Hamlet is madly in love with Ophelia. Polonius has no wit enough to go deeper than the surface of a man's character and that is why he misleads everybody. A fool like Polonius can never study a character like Hamlet which is a problem even to the greatest psychologists and shrewdest critics.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 1. Lines 113—116

By heaven, it is as proper.....to lack discretion—Polonius says to Ophelia that it is natural for the elderly people to be unduly strict and suspicious as it is natural for the young people to be thoughtless, reckless and without control. Polonius here regrets that he had been unduly suspicious about Hamlet's dissolute character and that is why he had warned Ophelia not to accept his advances so easily ; but then, Ophelia's cold response in love as advised by his father has turned Hamlet completely mad. But Polonius is absolutely wrong as he has been always wrong in the analysis of Hamlet's conduct or character.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 86—95

My liege and madam, to expostulate.....nothing else but mad—Polonius while going to tell Claudius and Gertrude that Hamlet is mad in love for Ophelio indulges in circumlocutions or round-about ways in order to express a simple idea or to convey a common message. He says that every body knows that day is day while night is night, duty is duty and king is king, and these things do not require any explanation. Similarly, the fact that Hamlet is mad is a plain truth and an unmistakable fact. What a tedious fool Polonius is indeed. Even Gertrude gets tired of him and says 'More matter with less art'.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 285—298

I have of late—but wherefore I know not.....you seem to say so—Hamlet speaks out his heart to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern but he does not disclose the cause of his disgust with human life and the world. He says that he has given up all his pastimes and entertainments which make one cheerful because he has been so much disgusted with life that he does not find any pleasure, any beauty, and glory or greatness in the universe. In his eyes, the sky with all its sun and moon and stars has lost its charm altogether. Hamlet says that although he knows that man is a wonderful creation of God particularly because of his great intelligence, his great ability to understand and judge things, his grace and strength of body and mind ; but then, Hamlet is not interested either in man or woman ; rather he has grown sick of them.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 307—312

He that plays the king..... shall halt for it—Hamlet here speaks to Rosencrantz about the company of players who are coming to entertain him that he will pay his respects to the player who will play the role of the King (Claudius). He then says that the knight who will come from France (Laertes) will fight a duel with his sword with Hamlet ; and then, the player who will play the role of the lover of Ophelia (Hamlet) will also be appreciated by Hamlet for atleast breathing sighs of love. Then, the person who will play the role of the humourist (Polonius) will die. Next the persons who play the role of the clowns of jesters (grave-diggers) will give sufficient food for laughter to the audience. Last of all, the player who will play the role of the lady gone mad with love (Ophelia) will speak out his (her) heart during the fits of love madness ; but if he fails to play her part it will be a discredit to the art of expression of the playwright.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 1. Lines 324—329

Nay, their endeavour keeps.....scarce come thither—When Hamlet enquires about the reputation of the tragic players of the city who have started travelling from place to place, Rosencrantz explains to him that these actors are prospering all right by shouting out their parts on the stage at the top of their voice which is highly appreciated by the audience, so much so, that even the good playrights or good players dare not come near them or dare compete with them. Of course, all these words are spoken by Rosencrantz rather sarcastically in order to bring to ridicule the new company of playwrights and players.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 377—382

The best actors in the world.....are the only men—While Hamlet is trying to make a fool of Polonius, the latter is trying to put on the best appearance as the critic of the drama. Polonius says that for all kinds of drama such as tragedies, comedies, histories romances, and for composing either pure verse or blank verse Seneca is the best writer of tragic plays while Plautus is the best writer of comic plays strictly in accordance with the rules of classical unity or classical technique of the dramatic art. Polonius by commenting upon the classical dramatists of ancient Greece and Rome without knowing anything about them is making a bigger fool of himself before Hamlet.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 413—423

For the play, I remember.....more handsome than fine—Hamlet here is talking about some play, probably, *Dido ; the Queen of Carthage*, supposed to have been composed by either Marlowe or Nash. This play, according to Hamlet's reports, was not liked by the whole audience, although according to certain good critics, it is a good play because of its well-knit scenes, its skill in plot construction and characterisation. But then one of the critics had said about this play that it lacked vulgar humour and artificiality in expression and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that is why, it did not appeal to the masses ; and yet according to Hamlet, it is a good, simple, decent play.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 430—442

The rugged Pyrrhus.....grandsire Prium seeks—The player cites some passage from the play, *Dido*,and says that Pyrrhus was seated on a house. His hands were all dark just as his design to murder Prium was foul. His dark complexion became darker because of the black coat of arms he was wearing. But than from head to foot, he was painted with the blood of his parents and children whom he had killed ; and the blood had been dried up under the rays of the sun and looked more hideous. His eyes seemed to come out of their sockets and with the clotted blood all over his body he really looked most monstrous when he was seeking the life of Prium

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 444—460

Anon he finds him.....did nothing—The player describes how Pyrrhus discovers Prium striking at the Greeks with ineffectual hands because he had grown weak and old. Pyrrhus was much younger than Prium and hence they were unequally matched. But Pyrrhus in a fit of rage strikes Prium but unfortunately does not hit him, although the very breath of sword of Pyrrhus kills Prium on the spot, and with the death of Prium the whole city of Troy, as it were, in mourning toppled down producing such a tremendous sound that the sword of Pyrrhus which was directed to strike the head of Prium seemed to hang in the air for sometime as if the hands and intellect of Pyrrhus seemed to be completely paralysed.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 461—470

But as we often see.....now falls on Prium—The player while continuing his description says that sometimes there is such a great lull before a storm that the air, the sky, the ocean, the clouds and even the earth seem so perfectly still but immediately afterwards thunder suddenly breaks into mighty claps. In the same manner the sword of Pyrrhus too took a temporary pause and then suddenly with far greater vigour than that of the hammer of Cyclops (the masons in hell) that manufacture the weapons of war for Mars the god of war, struck the head of Prium

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 471—475

Out out thou strumpet.....as low as to the fiends—These words are spoken by the player who describes how Pyrrhus killed Prium. The player or the dramatist speaks out in fits of sorrow when Prium is killed. He says that Fortune is just like a public prostitute whose choice of her lovers or visitors is most fickle and frivolous just as we find how Prium who was fortunate became most unfortunate being cruelly killed by Pyrrhus ; and therefore, the player wishes that the wheel of fortune which is known as the wheel of human destiny should be hurled down into Hell

CC-0. Panjab Digital Library Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

so that Fortune in future may not be able to play with the fate of any person.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 485—498

A clout upon that head.....passion in the gods—The player describes here how when Pyrrhus had killed most cruelly Prium, the Queen in the face of the toppling and burning towers of Troy came out in the open streets with only a cover or her head instead of the crown and with a blanket covering her lean but full-grown buttocks, and cursed Fortune in such bitter words that even the gods in heaven should have dropped tears from heaven in order to flood the earth with them when they found how cruelly Pyrrhus was chopping the body of old Prium.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 527—534

It is not monstrous.....all for nothing—Hamlet after having listened to the words of the player again talks within himself. He says that if a player by merely acting a part of an imaginary story can bring much glow of rage, sorrow and tears on his face how is it that Hamlet with all his real cause of wrath, revenge and sorrow can sit perfectly idle and express no sorrow or take no action in order to avenge the murder of his father by his uncle. He explains further that the player while playing an imaginary part can produce so much of emotion in his heart and also can express it in the form of rage and sorrow and tears on his face, why should Hamlet be not able to do the same when he has got real cause and has the duty of playing actual part of a dutiful son to a treacherously murdered father.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 540—544

He would drown the stage.....eyes and ears—Hamlet means to say that when Hecuba is nobody to the player and yet the player can be so serious about her sorrow when her husband is killed by Pyrrhus, how much more emotionally he would be moved if he had his own father murdered by his own uncle just like Hamlet's. Hamlet says that the player would have surely in that case flooded the stage with his tears and would have uttered his words in such a loud and frantic manner that he would have struck a terror into the heart of the guilty, would have frightened even the innocent and the ignorant people and would have made every body either dumb or deaf with his cries and curses. Hamlet means to say that he, with all his real cause of sorrow and revenge, is doing nothing and, therefore, he should atonce make a move in the direction of taking full revenge upon the murder of his father.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 545—549

Yet I, dull and muddy-mettled rascal.....a damned defeat was made—Hamlet feels repentant at heart that he has not made any effort in the direction of taking revenge upon the murderer of his father, and that is why, he calls himself a rascal, coward, a dreamer, an ignorant fool and unconscious of the real cause of his sorrow due to the murder of his father. He rebukes himself that even when

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

somebody has murdered a king, and robbed him of his kingdom, he is sitting perfectly unconcerned. This sort of inaction Hamlet considers as most condemnable.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 555-560

It cannot be but I am pigeon-livered.....kindless villain—Hamlet accuses himself and calls himself as the most cowardly creature that has no courage or even blood in his liver to wake him to revenge ; otherwise he should have immediately cut to pieces the murderer of his father and should have fed the kites and the vultures with the dismembered limbs of the most wicked, cruel, treacherous, unrepentant murderer of his father.

Explanation. Act 2. Sc. 2. Lines 569-574

I have heard that guilty creatures.....with most miraculous organ—Hamlet talks to himself that often those who have committed henous crimes, if they happen to attend some drama of similar crimes, are moved so much that they feel guilty at heart at the moment and sometimes disclose their secrets and thus come out with open confessions or at least they betray some signs at the moment which clearly indicate that they have committed such crimes.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 1. Lines 49-54

O, it is too true.....O heavy burthen—When Polonius says that the old people always put on the mask of virtue to hide their vicious character, Claudius is reminded of his own treacherous and vicious nature, and that is why he says that the words of Polonius are very true. He then confesses that the words of Polonius remind him of his guilt which he has been always trying to hide by putting on a smiling appearance. He compares himself as well as such evil persons who try to conceal their real character under the garb of smiles with the public prostitutes who also try to cover their ugliness or deformity of their limbs with certain paints or artificial devices. He last of all says that just as the character of a prostitute is most hateful because she tries to conceal her real ugliness by means of artificial decoration so also Claudius and other such evil persons are also more hateful because they try to conceal their wickedness by means of a smiling face or cheerful looks.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 1. Lines 55-69 (**Imp.**)

To be or not to be.....calamity of so long life—Hamlet is so much embittered at heart and disgusted with life that he is now thinking within himself whether it is really worthwhile to continue one's existence on earth or to put an end to it with one's own hands. He thinks within himself whether it is better to fight with adversity and all sorts of unfavourable circumstances and then try to conquer them or to fly away from them by putting an end to one's life which leads to eternal sleep or peace. On the one hand, he thinks that probably with death all the sorrows, all disappointments, all failures, all miseries come to an end, and therefore, death should be desired as early as possible. But on the other hand, he thinks also that death may

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

produce a kind of sleep which may be disturbed by hideous dreams of the other world far worse than the actual sorrows and miseries of earthly life. These dreams may be the horrors of punishment of the sins and crimes which one may have committed on earth or they may represent some kind of unknown fears of which men on earth cannot conceive till they go to the other world after death. Hamlet says that it is because of these fears of the other world which make people on earth suffer and bear all kinds of shocks and misfortunes. So, Hamlet is between two horns of a dilemma—whether he should continue to live or put an end to his life with his own hands.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 1. Lines 77-88 (**Imp.**)

For who would bear the whips.. .....lose the name of action—Hamlet says that if men were not afraid of horrors of the life in the other world after death, they would have certainly preferred to put an end to their life with a dagger, and they would not have suffered so much insults at the hands of the tyrants or injury at the hands of the exploiters, or the contempt of the proud people or the disappointments of love or the failures of success or the contempt of the insolent and impertinent persons or the injustice and unfairness at the hands of the merited people. It is these fears of the other world which make a coward of every man and does not permit him to commit suicide even when his conscience tells him to do so. It is fears which make one slow in taking action of any kind and thus makes him forget his resolution, his aim, his determination. It is these fears which drive a person from his resolved purpose and turn him away from the fulfilment of that purpose or aim. It is these fears that slow down his action as they have done in the case of Hamlet too, otherwise he would have probably taken his revenge upon the murderer of his father.

Students should note this soliloquy particularly because it brings out the inner philosophic or speculative nature of Hamlet for which he is sometimes very slow in action and sometimes misses the opportunity of fulfiling his aim, namely to punish the wrong doer Claudius who has treacherously murdered Hamlet's father and then married his mother and at the same time usurped the throne of Denmark.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc 1. Lines 111-114

Ay, truly : for the power of beauty.....gives it proof—When Ophelia wants to know if a beautiful woman can ever be tempted by an evil person, Hamlet says that a pretty woman who is of loose character can degrade even a virtuous and saintly person but a saintly person can not change the bad character of a pretty woman. Hamlet further says that formerly people use to believe that an honest or virtuous person can never be degraded by any woman of bad character but now-a-days people have changed their views in the matter *i. e.* they have started believing that a bad woman can degrade any saint or virtuous man while a virtuous man cannot degrade the character of a bad woman by his saintly [illegible]. But this

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS-MHE-2025-[illegible]

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

view of Hamlet, in our opinion, is not correct because otherwise the good would have no value or power whereas the evil would be all powerful in the world, which is not at all a fact.

Explanatian. Act 3. Sc. 1. Lines 150—160 **(Imp.)**

O, what a noble mind.....blasted with ecstasy—Ophelia, after having listened to the random words of Hamlet and also after having watched his strange behaviour, is convinced that he has gone mad. She feels the greatest shock on his account because she thinks that Hamlet was a courtier, soldier and scholar and also the idol of fashion and good manners. She pities herself also because formerly Hamlet used to make love to her and on that account she used to feel proud of it but now that Hamlet has gone off his head, all her sweet dreams have melted into the air. She believes that Hamlet was an ideal youth with the best physique and voice and temper but now his voice, temper and bodily form have melted just like the bells attached to some instrument which goes out of tune. She believes that the sole cause of Hamlet's madness is his love for her. But here she is wrong like her father because she is not aware how much he is embittered against the whole race of woman because of his mother's infidelity, and how much he has been disgusted with life itself because of his own uncle's treachery. Then again, even if Hamlet had been moved considerably in his mind and heart by the various shocks yet we can certify that Hamlet is not altogether off his head but that there is some method in his madness which means that his madness is pretended.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 2. Lines 7—12

O, it offends me.....it outherods Herod—Hamlet, while advising one of the players how he should play his part, says that he hates any player shouting unduly upon the stage and also overdoing his part by making unnecessary violent gestures or bodily movements. He says that the lowest class of audience who are known as groundlings may like such boisterous acting or perfectly silent acting as we have in dumb shows : but so far as Hamlet is concerned, he hates it with all his heart and he would like to get such actors literally whipped for making so much noise upon the stage for nothing as Herod or Termagant would do. Both Termagant and Herod stand here for boasters or boisterous persons. Hamlet compares the noisy actors with Termagant and Herod.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 2. Lines 14—26

Be not too tame neither.....a whole theatre of other—Hamlet here again advises the player how to act and play out his part. The player, according to Hamlet, should be neither too loud nor too quiet or silent ; he should exercise his own judgement at every step so that he may not do something unnatural because the aim of acting or playing is to do exactly as one would play or act in real life. The aim of acting or playing upon the stage is to reflect all the emotions and passions correctly just as one finds in human life, in human nature and human character. One should try one's best to reflect

CC-0. Jammu Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

exactly whatever is true to his nature and circumstances of life of the time to which he belongs. Hamlet further says that although sometimes overdoing or underdoing one's part may entertain or please the untrained or uneducated audience, it will never have any appeal to the intelligent audience who would rather feel sorry for such unnatural acting, which will spoil the reputation of the whole theartical company.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 1. Lines 60—67

For thou hast been as one.....what stop she please—Hamlet here analyses the character of Horatio and tells Horatio in the face that he is a person who has gone through all kinds of experience, and therefore, who receives both fortune and misfortune with the same attitude without either rejoicing or getting disheartened. In the opinion of Hamlet, those persons are the best or rather the happiest who can harmonise their emotions and passions with reason and who do not allow themselves to be puffed up or dejected with the change of their fortune. Hamlet compares human life with a flute or a pipe or any other musical instrument, and he regards Fortune as the piper or the musician who actually plays with human life and makes it sometimes joyous, happy and prosperous while at other times she makes it unhappy, sorrowful and miserable or wretched.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 2. Lines 140—147

Yet though I distrust.....great love grows there—The player Queen says to the player King that although she disbelieves or doubts if the King will love her afterwards in future or loves even now as before when they were just married, yet her doubt or distrust should not dishearten him because the fear of a woman *i. e.*, distrust in her husband grows proportionately with the degree of love she bears to him, that is, the more she distrusts him, the more she is supposed to love him. This is psychologically quite correct. If a woman does not distrust her husband at all it means that she is not interested in him at all, and therefore she does not love him at all. But then, too much of distrust is also bad although it surely indicates the greatest degree of her love for her husband.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 2. Lines 165—192 (**Imp.**)

Purpose is but the slave to memory.....when thy first lord is dead—The player King says to the player Queen that it is the nature of human beings to break their promises, to go back upon their words and to change their decisions which they have already made. He says that the decisions of man are just like fruits, so long the decisions are fresh and new they are likely to be acted upon just as green fruits stick to the tree while the ripe fruits drop on the ground, just so old decisions are either forgotten or unobserved by men. The player King further says that we mostly forget to fulfil our obligations to others ; but so long the blood is young, the desires are also strong and keen, and naturally, the promises are not broken but when one grows old and when the passion in man dies with the advance of years the promises particularly of love are not honoured. So, the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding By IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

fulfilment of promises or acting upon decisions would depend first of all upon one's youth, and then upon how long the decisions or promises are old ; and it is only then, they can be expected to be honoured or fulfilled. The player King further says that our joys and sorrows are also like our promises and decisions. When one rejoices one is sure to grieve and vice versa it is true because sorrows and joys go by turns in human life.

Then again, the player King says that this world is most changeable, and nothing in it lasts for ever ; and therefore, even love also changes with the change of fortune. It is a fact that people love others only when others are prosperous ; otherwise nobody cares to love the fallen and the decayed in fortune. But it is difficult to say whether fortune follows love or love follows fortune. But then, it is found in the world that when a man is fortunate or prosperous every body loves him ; but when he gorws poor nobody cares to stare at him even. So, we should says that love follows fortune and not vice versa. It is only when we are prosperous that we are surrounded by friends but when we are poor every body becomes our enemy. This is very true.

The player King, last of all, says that all our decisions and plans are completely upset or overthrown by Fate ; what man proposes God or Fate disposes ; and that is why, we can say that man can propose, plan, decide or promise many things but it lies with Fate whether such proposals, decisions and promises have the chance of fulfilment or not. So the player Queen may be saying now that she will not marry any more in her life but the moment her husband will die she may change her mind, forget her promises, and marry again. This is also very true. So long there is hey-day in the blood, so long there is the desire of the body, man or woman remembers his or her promises of love but when they advance in years and when their blood loses the youthful vigour and the passionate desires they forget also their promises of love. The reason is that love is not a hankering of the soul or a desire of the moth for the star and of the night for the morrow but out and out a desire of the flesh.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 2. Lines 193—200

Nor earth to me give food... ...ever I be wife—The player Queen assures the player King that if she marries for the second time ever in her life she is prepared to accept any kind of punishment on that account. She is prepared to be deprived of food, light, air, rest, recreation, joy, hope and everything else in the world. She is prepared to eat even the most insufficient food of a hermit ; she is prepared to face any kind of trouble and misery in life which completely blight all her joys and make her miserable throughout her existence on earth. She is even prepared to lose all her peace of mind and happiness on earth and even in the other world. Students should note that the bigger the promise or assurance the greater will be its unfufilment or treachery, as we actually find in the case of Gertrude who forgetting

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

all her husband's love for her marries the murderer of her husband. That is why no promise from man or woman is to be trusted.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 2. Lines 331—339

Why, look you now.....cannot play upon me—When Guilden stern says that he cannot plays upon a pipe. Hamlet says sarcastically that Guildenstern thinks that Hamlet is worse than a pipe because otherwise how could Guildenstern dare play upon Hamlet *i. e.*, how could Guildenstern dare know the weak points or secrets of the mind and body of Hamlet and do whatever he liked with him (Hamlet). Hamlet's idea of saying all this is that Guildenstern and Rosencrantz have been trying their best to know the real cause of Hamlet's madness. If they cannot play upon a pipe or a flute which is an inanimate object, how can they play upon a human being who is a far more complicated creature with such a maysterous mind and his psychology. Hamlet means to say in other words that it is the most difficult task to read the mind of a human being, and therefore, fools like Guildenstern and Rosencrantz should not venture to discover the real cause of Hamlet's madness.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 3. Lines 11—13 (**Imp.**)

The single and peculiar life.....but with a general groan—When Claudius says that Hamlet's pretended or real madness is dangerous not only to Claudius but also to the whole State of Denmark, Rosencrantz just to flatter Claudius says that the personal safety of a king is much more needed than the personal safety of a human individual, although it is the duty of every human individual also to protect himself from all possible dangers and from all causes of unhappiness. In the case of a king, the duty is more important and responsible because upon the health and peace of the king depend the welfare of all his subjects, because the king is just like a mighty wheel attached to some great mountain top while the subject are just like so many spokes or other accessories of the wheel ; and so when the wheel is dislodged from the mountain top *i. e.*, the State, it is not only the life of the king which is ruined but also the lives of so many other people who are his subjects. The king, therefore, does not die alone or suffer alone but along with him all his subjects also suffer and die. But this argument is not at all convincing because if the King of a State is a bad man as Claudius, no body would suffer if the king is killed or ruined ; rather every body will be rid of a curse if the king is destroyed.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 3. Lines 57—64 (**Imp.**)

In the corrupted currents of this world.....to give in evidence—Claudius talking within himself seems to be repentant at heart because of this crime of murder of his own brother whose wife he has married and whose son he has robbed of his accession to the throne. He says that in this corrupt world, even when a person is caught red handed, he can bribe the judge and escape from the penalty but before the God in the other world, after death, no such means of escape from punishment is possible. In the other world God will question

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2026-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

every body about his past deeds on earth and every body will have to render a correct account of himself, and he will be punished or rewarded according to his deeds. One can escape man's laws but not Heaven's laws. This belief in the other world and the dispensation of justice to every body according to his good or bad deeds is a foolish notion because nobody can certify that there is really another world after death or that there is any God in this or in the other world or even that any body is going to question anybody else after one's death. In our view everything comes to an end with the end of life. There is no life beyond the grave nor any life previous to this life.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 3. Lines 79—88

O, this is hire and salary.....seasoned for his passage—when Claudius is found in a kneeling posture and praying to God for pardon or mercy for his misdeeds, Hamlet says within himself that he can easily kill Claudius on the very spot but then he is not prepared to kill him at a moment when he is praying to God and probably God is pardoning him and admitting him to heaven. Hamlet will not kill Claudius at this moment because he does not like to give him a passport to heaven particularly when Claudius had killed Hamlet's father during his sleep and in the full bloom of youth when he could not have the chance of praying to God for forgiveness for all the sins and crimes he might have committed during his life. Besides, in the opinion of Hamlet, to kill a man when he is unguarded as Claudius is not at all aware of the presence of Hamlet behind him would be the height of cowardice, this kind of killing in cold blood and also stealthily is not the honourable way of taking revenge Claudius should be killed when he is properly ready and prefectly conscious that Hamlet is prepared to kill him ; and besides, Claudius should also be not in the least repentant or should not be praying to God for mercy or forgiveness at all so that he may not have the chance of going to heaven after being killed. What a stupid notion ! Even the most superstitious people will not have as Hamlet is expressing here. Of course, this notion must be either of Shakespeare himself or of the Elizabethan people whom Shakespeare has painted in all his plays.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 40—50 (**Imp.**)

Such an act that blurs the grace.....thought-sick at the moment Hamlet has been reproaching his own mother Gertrude for her immodesty to have married Claudius, the murderer of his own brother ; and when Gertrude enquires why Hamlet should be reproaching her so unkindly, what she has done that she deserves such rude and unkind words from her son, Hamlet explains that his mother's action in marrying Claudius, whether knowing or not knowing his crime of murder is in itself the most shameful thing on earth, particularly when she is sufficiently aged and also when her husband had been such a good and loving husband that he did not deserve to be forgotten by his wife so quickly. Therefore, the action

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gandhi Memorial College Collection Bantalab Jammu

of Gertrude in the eyes of Hamlet is the most shameful act that converts all virtues of a woman—modesty, innocence, love, fidelity into a farce. Hamlet says that one who can do such an act can also turn all kinds of solemn pledges of social and domestic life, all vows of religion and morality into nothing but false promises of the gamblers and drunkards and swindlers. Last of all, Hamlet says that the action of his mother had made the sacred pledge of human marriage into a beastly relation ; and as much it has sickened the very face of the sun, the moon, the stars and the earth by its unholy glow as if the whole universe has been sickened because of the approach of the Doom's Day when the universe is supposed to come to its final extinction.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 55—63

See what a grace was seated.....this was your husband—Hamlet rebukes his mother for her shameful act of having married Claudius by pointing out the difference between her former husband and her present husband—what a world of difference between the two. Hamlet describes his father's physique, his personality, his look, his gait and everything else about him ; and compares them all with the gait, personality, looks and limbs of the gods like Hyperion, Jove Mars and Mercury. Hamlet means to say by all his words that his father was just like a god while Claudius is just like a beast ; and therefore, to marry such a beast after having forgotten such a god is indeed the most foolish and shameful act.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 65—80

Have you eyes.....could not so mope—Hamlet while rebuking his mother for having married Claudius says that she must have lost all her senses, all her powers of judgment, all her senses of understanding, and all her reasons because otherwise she should have distinguished between a person like her former husband and a man like Claudius. Hamlet says that if Gertrude had any sense she would not have prefered to feed on a barren land and leave a beautiful mountain, *i.e.*, she would not have liked a person like Claudius forgetting a person like Hamlet's father. Hamlet believes that it can not be out of any love for Claudius that she has married him because at her advanced age she can not have the same flame of love in her breast as she had it during her youth ; and besides, she should have exercised her judgment at least before she agreed to marry Claudius but then, she must have lost all powers of judgment. And so far her desire of the flesh is concerned, it also must be quite dead at her age and therefore, it is only madness or blindness which must have prompted her to marry Claudius. But then, in the opinion of Hamlet, some devil must have tempted her to fall a victim to this kind of error ; otherwise a person even without eyes, ears, nose and all other senses could not have consciously made such a mistake in life as she has done by marrying Claudius. Hamlet compares his father with a mountain, Claudius with a moor, his mother as playing the game of the blind man's buff, with a creature without any of her senses.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 81—86

Rebellious hell.....reason ponders will—Hamlet says that if the desire of the flesh can burn so hotly in the limbs of an old woman like Gertrude how much more hotly should it burn in the body of a young woman ; and therefore, if an old woman can forget all her self-control, her sense of decency, her reason and judgment, no body should accuse any young woman if she goes wrong and commits any kind of sexual vice or sex-indulgence. This is very true. But then, Hamlet forgets that the sex desire in man or woman never dies ; rather, in advanced years the sex desire often flares up with greater violence than in youth.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 117—123

Alas, how is it with you.....whereon do you look—When Hamlet sees his father's Ghost there comes a change upon Hamlet's face all of a sudden which Gertrude notices ; and that is why she says that Hamlet is staring at the empty air or in a strange manner and that his eyes seem to be dilated or rather coming out of their sockets with amazement. Gertrude does not see any ghost and that is why she wonders with whom Hamlet is talking and why all the hair on his head and other limbs of his body are standing on end like the quills of a porcupine. Gertrude feels that Hamlet's mind is very much disturbed and that is why he looks strange and behaves also in such a strange manner ; and therefore, she advises him to have patience, to be cool, and to have peace of mind otherwise he may go mad if not already gone mad.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 161—170 (**Imp.**)

That monster custom.....with wondrous potency—Hamlet advises his mother not to lie in the same bed with Claudius any more. If she resists the temptation of lying once and then if she resists the temptation for the second and the third time she will in the long run be able to control her desire to lie with him altogether. This is how a good habit can be formed and a bad habit can be changed. Hamlet describes a bad habit as a monster in the sense that unless it is changed and finally given up it degrades a person and eats into the person's vitality and ruins him or her completely. In the beginning, it may be slightly difficult to shake off a bad habit but slowly and gradually it can be altogether conquered. That is the real mystery of all habits or customs. Students should note the distinction between habits and custom. A habit is the repetition of the same action in the case of an individual while a custom is the repetition of the same action in the case of many individuals but Shakespeare uses 'custom' in the sense of 'habit'.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 181—188

Let the bloat king.....but mad in craft—Hamlet says to his mother that Claudius will try to kiss her, caress her, scratch softly

CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

with a woman ; and that while doing all this Claudius will try to get out the secret from her why Hamlet is mad or what is the real cause of his madness. Hamlet advises his mother to tell Claudius plainly that Hamlet is not really mad but he only pretends to be mad.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 189—196

For who that is but a Queen..... your own neck down—Hamlet means to say that when Claudius will fondle and caress Gertrude while lying in the bed with him, she cannot resist the temptation of confessing to him the secrets of the madness of Hamlet and thereby ruin herself as the monkey in he well known fable once opened the basket of the birds and got into the basket and tried to fly from the house-top only to break its neck.

Explanation. Act 3. Sc. 4. Lines 205—210

For it is the sport.....two crafts directly meet—Hamlet tells his mother that Claudius is sending him to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with some evil motive, but then, Hamlet is ready to face whatever mischief they may be playing upon him. Hamlet says further that he knows how to blow up the engineer who will do something for endangering Hamlet's life or for doing any kind of injury. Hamlet last of all says that he finds a good deal of delight when one clever man meets face to face with another clever man for playing mischief upon each other, or in other words, Hamlet will be glad to face and outwit his opponents whoever they may be whether Claudius himself or his agents, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Students should note here how Hamlet smells before hand that Claudius is sending him with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with some evil motive, namely, to get him executed, and that is why he gets ready to face the coming catastrophe.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 1. Lines 40—45

And what is untimely done.....the woundless air—Claudius says to Gertrude that he is going to take some steps so that the unwise killing of Polonius by Hamlet may not be misunderstood or misreported by the common people which may injure the reputation of the King of Denmark. (*i. e.*, Claudius) Claudius means to say that he will manipulate things in such a manner that no blame can fall upon him for the killing of Polonius and that no mischief may do any harm to him but on the other hand prove absolutely harmless just as when a cannon is fired in the air the shot cannot wound the air.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 2. Lines 13—17

Ay, sir, that soaks up.....be dry again—When Rosencrantz enquires why Hamlet takes him to be a sponge, Hamlet explains the significance of the word 'sponge' with reference to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet says that both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Claudius' secret agents for getting out Hamlet's secrets.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding By IKS-MoE-2023-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and in this sense they suck up like a sponge whatever they collect by their saying and when they go to Claudius with their collected informations, Claudius, as it were, squeezes them just like a sponge and thus gets all the necessary informations. Hamlet again compares the relationship between Claudius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with that between a monkey and the delicious food which the monkey keeps in his mouth in order to chew it at leisure. Claudius here plays the role of the monkey because he maintains and pays for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for collecting informamation about Hamlet, and this information serves as the delicious food which he keeps in his mouth to chew last of all at leisure. Hamlet means to say that with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have served the purpose of Claudius, he would swallow them or destroy them as the monkey swallows the most delicious food keeping it for a long time in his mouth, or he would squeeze them out of their existence or kill them when they have served his purpose.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 3. Lines 4—11

He is loved of the distract and multitude.....not at all—Claudius reflects upon the dangerous character of Hamlet and says with himself that Hamlet is a very popular personality that Hamlet is liked by the people not because the people judge his merits but because they are sentimental about him. Hence, if Claudius goes to award any punishment to Hamlet for killing Polonius, people will not consider whether Hamlet actually deserves the punishment or not but they will be moved in his favour simply because he will suffer the punishment. Therefore, the safest way of hushing up the whole incident of killing of Polonius is to send away Hamlet to England which will put a stop to all kinds of rumours and misinterpretation of the accident. And besides, in order to make the position of Claudius secure it is necessary to take some violent steps against Hamlet, because Hamlet is really a difficult problem, and hence, to solve this problem some drastic solution would be necessary, namely, to get him secretly assassinated in England. It is a fact that in order to cure a foul disease one has to prescribe a very serious step *e. g.*, operation or amputation of a limb if some of the body becomes septic.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 3. Lines 20—24

Your worm is your only emperor.....that is the end—While commenting upon the dead body of Polonius Hamlet is reflecting that the body of a living creature when it is dead is finally eaten up by the worms, or in other words, the worm is the final and last eater of every living creature whether he is a monarch or a beggar. Hamlet further says that in order to make the human body healthy we eat all sorts of substantial things such as the meat of fowls, mutton, beaf, pork, eggs, butter etc., but than, when we die our healthy body serves as the food for the worms, and therefore, the worm is the emperor for diet or last ending eater and greatest eater of all living creatures.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh. Funding by MoE-IKS. 2025 Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 3. Lines 56—62

And, England, if my love thou holdest.....death of Hamlet—Claudius after having sent Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to England with a letter for the immediate execution of Hamlet speaks within himself as if addressing the King of England in imagination. He says to the King of England that if England has any regards for the power of Denmark, which England once felt when the Danes invaded England, and if England remembers still what a great defeat Denmark inflicted upon England, England—cannot afford to neglect the command of Denmark for the immediate execution of Hamlet on receiving the letter from Claudius, the present King of Denmark.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 4. Lines 25—29

Two thousand souls.....why the man dies—When Hamlet is told by the Captain that the forces of Norway are marching against Poland to capture some small piece of worthless land for the sake of honours only, he says that for nothing thousands of soldier will fight over the worthless land and die, and none of the two countries will materially gain anything. Hamlet moralises over this little incident and says that it is due to the ambition or some such madness of some king that a country has to lose the lives of so many people. This madness on the part of a king is just like a disease in the body which is hidden but which slowly and gradually eats into the vitals of the body and finally destroys it. Similarly, the ambitions of kings or rather the whims of the great military generals ruin people and countries. This is very true because even now-a-days we find that the wrong and perverted ideologies of many of the wicked politicians of the world are producing wars and ruining countries and their people.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 4. Lines 34—45 (**Imp.**)

What is a man.....means to do it—After having seen before his very eyes Fortinbras marching against Poland and winning victory over a small worthless piece of land, Hamlet begins to reflect within himself. He says that there would be no difference between men and brutes if men were merely to eat and sleep all day long without exerting themselves to action. He argues, at the same time, that man has been endowed by Nature or God with his power of reason, which he will have to exercise, while taking any action in any matter. But, when man goes to think over any matter or when he goes to take any action, he finds that he mostly forgets his determination or that he grows a coward in taking action. In his own case too, Hamlet finds that although he has got sufficient cause, reason, strength and also resources for taking revenge upon the murderer of his father yet he is sitting idle and taking no action. So, inwardly, Hamlet is feeling the pinches of his conscience that he is not doing his duty as the son of his father, and is not obeying the advice given by his father's Ghost to take revenge upon Claudius.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 4. Lines 53—56

Rightly to be great.....at the stake—Hamlet means to say that greatness lies not in fighting or quarrelling over a worthless thing without any sufficient cause but it lies in fighting even over a small cause in defence of one's honour or self-respect. Hamlet seems to attach a great value to the quarrel over a small piece of land between Norway and Poland simply because the question of honour is involved in the quarrel ; otherwise he would condemn such a quarrel. Some of the Indian annotators have misinterpreted these lines we have just now explained. They say that Hamlet does not envy the active spirit of Fortinbras while marching against Poland and winning the victory. We should like to point out to these annotators the last two lines in this particular scene in which Hamlet says, 'O, from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth.' The words of Hamlet here clearly indicate his feelings how much he is inspired by the example of Fortinbras.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 5—13

This speaks much of her father.....yet much unhappily—Some gentleman speaks to Gertrude about Ophelia. He says that she speaks a lot about her deceased father ; she complains that there is much of wickedness and treachery in this world ; she sometimes beats her breast and foams and frets at little things ; she talks also certain suspicious things, which are not very meaningful ; her words seem meaningless ; but then, when people listen to her they make out some sense from her words according to their own understanding and imagination. When one watches her gestures, movements and glances, one feels that there is some significance about her words although at the same one feels that her words are the expression of her unhappy soul.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 16—20

To my sick soul.....fearing to be spilt—Gertrude seems to be conscious of her guilt and repentant at heart, and that is why she says that to her unhappy and guilty soul every little thing appears to be suspicious and produces fear about some calamity approaching near. She further says that guilty minds are always afraid of exposing their crimes or sins, and while they try to conceal them they all the more betray their crimes and sins by their very gestures and movements or words. This is psychologically very true, because a thief or any criminal fears that behind every bush or wall some policeman is concealed in order to arrest him.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 78—79

When sorrows some.....in battalions—These words of Shakespeare have become famous. Claudius here feels that he is surrounded by misfortunes or calamities, which may finally lead to his ruin. For example, Polonius has been killed by Hamlet which may create the suspicion in the people that Polonius has been killed

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

by Claudius. Then, Ophelia has gone mad because of her grief on account of the death of her father. Next, Laertes has come back from France and he is very likely to be misled by the rumours and be instigated to take revenge upon Claudius and not upon Hamlet, the real killer of Polonius. That is why Claudius rightly says that when misfortunes come to a man they come in a crowd or in a quick succession, and not one by one, slowly and gradually ; and that is how such misfortunes completely over-whelm a man.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 89—95

Her brother is in secret come.....in ear and ear Claudius says to Gertrude that Laertes has come back from France secretly on hearing about the death of his father. Laertes is at present completely surprised at the sudden death of his father, and there are many people who are poisoning his ears with their own interpretations of the cause and agent of the death of Polonius. If no reason is exercised and the rumours and interpretations of the people are accepted by Laertes, it may effect the safety of Claudius, or in other words, Claudius may be wrongly regarded as the murderer of Polonius. Naturally, the return of Laertes from France at this hour is most dangerous for Claudius. Claudius forgets one thing while he is fearing the misinterpretations of the people that he is indirectly the cause of the death of Polonius. Had Claudius not engaged Polonius to spy upon the talk between Hamlet and his mother, Polonius would not have been killed. Hamlet never killed Polonius knowingly ; rather he thought that it was Claudius himself who must have been behind the arras and spying upon him while talking to his mother.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 99—106

The ocean over peering of his list.....Laertes shall be King—Some gentleman reports to Claudius that Laertes, at the head of some rebellious people, has invaded the palace and has overcome all the officers or sentinels of Claudius. The gentleman here compares the rebellious crowd with the raging ocean that oversteps the shore sometimes when there is a great storm and also when there are mountain waves. The gentleman reports further that the rebellious crowd without having any consideration of tradition, custom, law or convention is declaring Laertes their Lord, their King.

Explanation. Act. 4. Sc. 5. Lines 116—119

That drop of blood..... ...of my true mother—When Gertrude asks Laertes to be calm and patient, Laertes flares up and says that if he goes to hold his peace when his father has been murdered, he would prove to be an unfaithful son of his parents, and that he would indirectly prove that he is an illegitimate son of his mother, because otherwise why should he not take revenge upon the man, who is responsible for the death of his father ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 131—136

To hell allegiance...thoroughly for my father—Laertes says that he wants only to know who is really responsible for his father's death ; and when he comes to know the man, he will not care for any body in the universe, or God or Devil ; he will not care for punishment or curse of any kind ; he would risk everything and forget everything, and take immediate action to revenge the death of his father on the very spot with his sword. What a contrast between the character of Hamlet and that of Laertes. Hamlet considers the *pros* and *cons* of every matter ; he exercises his coolest reason in order to consider the justice of every case before deciding on any action ; but then, Laertes is not reckless, rash and impatient to take the worst action without a moment's delay to punish the wrong doer ; the murderer of his father. Laertes actually acts upon his emotion without consulting his reason for a moment, and that is why, appears to bear a sharp—contrast with Hamlet, who is calm, cool-headed, and even speculating and calculating, and even delatory in his action for the same cause.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 5. Lines 155—163

O heat, dry up my brains.....after the thing it loves—When Ophelia appears on the scene, Laertes feels rudely shocked to find her gone off her head. He says that even if he sheds all the tears from his eyes still he can not compensate the sad spectacle of his sister's pathetic condition. But then, he declares his determination to take the fullest revenge upon the man who is responsible for the death of his father which has turned Ophelia mad. Laertes calls her sister as lovely as the rose of the spring season. He feels shocked to find that the brain of a woman should be as weak as the life of an old man is short. He also wonders to find that Nature is most refined or delicate in the matter of love, because when one misses or loses the object of love, one actually loses the head or senses also, which means, in other words, that when one is rudely shocked at heart for the loss of love, one, as it were, sends out his or her reason in search of that lost love, as in the present case, when Ophelia comes to know that her father Polonius is dead or has been killed, she sends out her reason or senses *i.e.* she loses her senses, as it were, in quest of her lost father. This is a very queer sort of argument or reason on the part of Laertes but it is nevertheless true psychologically. When one actually loses love, one often goes mad and also commits suicide. We do not know if Ophelia dies of accident or commits suicide.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 7 Lines 16—24

The other motive.....I had aimed them—When Laertes enquires why Claudius did not take any step against Hamlet when he knew that Hamlet had killed Polonius, Claudius says that for two reasons he could not take any step against Hamlet. First, because Hamlet was too dear to his mother, and naturally, it would have been a great shock to her if he had perished Hamlet. The

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funded by MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

other reason is that Hamlet is loved by most of the people of Denmark, and as such, if Claudius went to take any step against Hamlet, he would have been seriously misunderstood by the people, who would have forgiven the faults of Hamlet and remember their love for him on the one hand, while on the other, who would have thought that Claudius was too cruel to Hamlet, and that is how any kind of punishment inflicted upon Hamlet would have missed its mark *i.e.*, instead of the arrow hitting Hamlet, the real culprit, it would have recalled on Claudius.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 7. Lines 61—69

If he be now returned..... ....and call it accident—Claudius says to Laertes that even if Hamlet has actually returned from England and is not going out of Denmark any more, Claudius has arranged such a plan that Hamlet shall positively have to lose his life and that the blame will never come upon any body, and even his mother will take his death as but an accident. Claudius seems to be very ingenious in hatching conspiracies for the ruin of people ; but then, his supreme plan in the case of Hamlet this time at least does not succeed completely although it does achieve its purpose to some extent and brings about a mass tragedy at the end of the play.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 7. Lines 77—82

A very riband on the cap of youth .....health and graveness—Claudius here speaks to Laertes about the art of fencing, which in his opinion is a thing of necessity as well as a luxury for the young people, who may use it sometimes carelessly as many people abuse it by picking up unnecessary quarrels with other people and fighting duals with them as they usually do in France and even in England. But then, the art of fencing is as much a sign of personality as it is mark of decoration just as clothes of dark colour add to the health and personality of a person who is considerably advanced in years. Claudius does not seem to attach any very great importance to the art of fencing although just to inflame some amount of enthusiasm and interest in Laertes, he talks highly of it so that Laertes may be tempted to fight with Hamlet and kill him in the duel.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 7. Lines 111—124 **(Imp.)**

But that I know love..... ...that hurts by easing—When Laertes wants to know why Claudius is enquiring about his love for his dead father, Claudius explains how love in the human breast slowly dies away with the lapse of time, because Claudius belives that there is something in human love that takes away the fire and the flame from it. Claudius further says that love, like every good thing, dies because of excessive indulgence in it. Probably Claudius is talking here of sensual or sexual love, which actually dies with too much indulgence in it ; but then, the sexual desire does not die till the body perishes. Any how, Claudius says again that we propose to do many things in our life just as Laertes is proposing to kill Hamlet out of his honest anger and revenge ; but then, even this honest desire would

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

die out soon if it is not put into action immediately. Our desire to do a thing depends upon opportunities, which may not be available always, although the desire to do a thing may be present. So, in the case of the love of Laertes for his father or his desire to kill Hamlet may not last long. Last of all, Claudius says that if we do not perform an act in time, the unfulfilment may injure our heart most seriously with despair and sorrow. Claudius must have been disappointed by Gertrude in her love for him because Gertrude, on the warning by her son, must have denied Claudius the vulgar pleasures of the bed, and that is why Claudius is taking in this strain about human love. Besides, Claudius's ideal of love is only sexual enjoyment, and that is why, he can not believe in the permanancy of pure love, which means a hankering of the soul and not a desire of the flesh

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 7. Lines 142—146

So mortal that, but dip a knife in it.....but scratched withal—Laertes says to Claudius that he has collected such a strong poison from some quack, which if smeared with the point of the sword with which he will fight a duel with Hamlet that even the slightest scratch with the point would poison the whole blood in the body and kill him positively because no medicine on earth can countract the effect of that poison.

Explanation. Act 4. Sc. 7 Lines 173—183

Her clothes spread wide.....to muddy death—When Laertes enquires where and how Ophelia was drowned. Gertrude explains to him that Ophelia was drawned in some brook near a willow tree. When Ophelia got drowned, her clothes at first spread wide over the water and made her look like a mermaid. She was then singing some song as if she was completely unaware of her doom or as if the water was her element in which she was bred and brought up ; but then, after some time, all her clothes became saturated with water and became quite heavy and sunk into the bottom of the brook with her body so that she found a burial in the muddy bed of the stream.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 1. Lines 97—104

This fellow might be in his time.....the inheritor himself have no more, ha ?—When one of the grave-diggers digs out a skull in the churchyard, Hamlet remarks that the skull might have belonged to some property dealer who was in the habit of buying and selling lands, according to certain laws, that govern the disposal of landed property. This property dealer might have earned money or lost money by means of certain deals, which he excuted by certain legal documents ; but then what has happened to all his property deals now ? What has happened to all those legal documents or his profits and losses ? What had happened to the buyer and the seller of landed estates now ? Everything has come to dust just as the living body of the property dealer has been reduced to a mere skull and nothing else. Hamlet is here philosophysing over the emptiness of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

human life and all human activities and ambitions, how all of them come to nothing after death. This is another instance of Hamlet's inborn speculative nature, and it distinguishes him from the grave-diggers, who do not bother about the skulls, which they dig from day to day throughout the year.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 1. Lines 199—201

Imperious Caesar.....to expel the winter's flaw—While philosophising over the skulls in the churchyard, Hamlet philosophises over the Kings and the Emperors in the world, how they appear to be most powerful, how they awe and frighten and tyrannise over others when they are alive ; but when they are dead, they become just a handful of dust with which some breach in the walls is patched up or some opening is sealed in order to prevent the passage of the cold air in winter. If this be the end of such great personalities, then why should men feel proud of anything ? Why men should bother about the life or the death of any body in the world ? Why should we attach any importance to any of our achievements or glories or honours in our life ?

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 1. Lines 212—220

Her obsequies have been.....of bell and burial—The first priest explains to Laertes that as nobody knows how Ophelia died, whether she committed suicide in fits of madness of actually got drowned in the brook by accident, so according to the rules of Christian burial such a person can not be burried according to the same rules and ceremonies which are observed in the cause of persons, who die a normal death. The priest means to say that those who die a doubtful or unnatural death do not receive those holy prayers or the observance of those rites and ceremonies which others receive in their funeral. But then, because of the orders of the King of Denmark instead of pebbles and stones, flowers are now being scattered over the grave of Ophelia, for consideration of her unmarried life.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 3—10

Sir, in my heart.....rough-hew them how we will—Hamlet describes his feelings to Horatio when he became a captive along with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the hands of the sea robbers. Hamlet says that he was suffering much greater tortures in his captivity than the sailors who rise in rebellion are punished to lie in the rack. Hamlet further says that during his captivity he committed some rash act which ultimately led to his freedom : and that is why he believes that rashness is sometimes commendable and should be regarded as much better than slowness of action, which is generally born of calculation, speculation and deliberation. Of course, in these lines Hamlet does not tell Horatio what rashness he had committed during his captivity : but then, he says that rashness sometimes comes to a man which when the unseen hand of Fate guides him. Hamlet

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

seems to believe that every one of our actions, whether rash or deliberate, is governed by destiny or by the will of God : as a matter of fact, every action, according to Hamlet, is the result of the guidance by some unknown power, call it God or Fate or by any other name. Students should note such instances wherever Shakespeare through the lips of the hero repeats his reference to the supermacy of Fate, and compare them with other instances in which he talks of the free will of man. But then Shakespeare, being also human like ourselves, could not afford to ignore Fate because he also could not explain away some of the events or incidents or circumstances in human life which are absolutely beyond human control.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 12—26

Up from my cabin, my sea-gown.....my head should be struck off—Hamlet relate show he in darkness, while on board the ship, tried to discover Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and also the packet that Claudius had sent with them with the orders that Hamlet should be executed. Hamlet further says that when he had got hold of the sealed packet and opened it and also had read the contents, he was horrified at the wickedness of Claudius who had invented all sorts of lies imputing all sorts of crimes to Hamlet and who therefore had recommended to England the immediate execution of Hamlet for the safety of both England and Denmark. Hamlet means to say that the secret packet which contained the commission of Claudius for the execution of Hamlet revealed in black and white what a mean and treacherous character Claudius was.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 29—37

Being thus netted round with villainies.....yeoman's service—Hamlet says to Horatio that after having seen the contents of the packet he felt that he was surrounded by enemies and by their treacheries ; and therefore, he immediately sat down to prepare another commission to be sealed in the same packet and to be conveyed to the same authorities in England. Hamlet says that althought he never liked the idea of forgoing any body's handwriting or any body's signature yet he had to do it for the sake of saving his own life and of paying back the evil-doers in their own coin. He says that he had forgotten the art of drafting any commission or of copying any body's handwriting ; but then, somehow or the other he was fortunate enough to do the job successfully. So, the art of copying or forging any body's handwriting and signature, which he used to hate formerly did him a great service by saving his life from the hands of the murderer.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 39—48

An earnest conjuration from the King.....not shriving-time allowed—Hamlet in these lines relates when he actually wrote in the commission to the King of England for the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He says that he wrote to the King of England how there was a good relationship between Denmark and England,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

how the future peace and friendliness between the two countries would depend upon the carrying out of the present orders of the King of Denmark by executing the bearers of the commission or the secret sealed packet containing the orders without even granting them the chance or moment of praying to God for His forgiveness of all their sins and crimes in life. Students should note here that even Hamlet is guilty of the death of his two old school fellows, however justified his action may be. That is why, Hamlet pays such a dear penalty at the end of the play. His double guilt of killing Polonius with his own hands and of getting Guildenstern and Rosencrantz killed make him pay some amount of penalty at the end of the play although critics say that Shakespeare does not observe in any of his plays the theory of poetic justice. But then, if we believe that in Shakespearean plays character is destiny, how can Hamlet escape from the consequences of his accidental or deliberate actions, good or bad, justified or unjustified ?

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 62—70

Does it not, thinkest thee.....in further evil ?—When Horatio also feels disgusted with the villainies and treacheries of Claudius, Hamlet says in support of Horatio that if Claudius, could behave so villainously and treacherously with Hamlet, why should he not be perfectly justified in killing Claudius ? Hamlet further says that when Claudius could murder his father, marry his mother and treat her as a mere prostitute, and also rob him of his chances of becoming the King of Denmark, and last of all, when Claudius could plot against Hamlet's life in such a treacherous manner, why should not Hamlet put an end to the life of Claudius, who is indeed the pest of Denmark and the cause of so much of sufferings of the people of Denmark ?

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 55—62

Why, man, they did make love.....of mighty opposites—Hamlet says that both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern loved the mean job of acting as the spies of Claudius, and that he does not feel any pinch of conscience for having got them killed because the nature of their profession leads mostly to such an unhappy end, and that besides, it was dangerous for them to come in between such great personalities as Hamlet and Claudius when they were fighting with each other on their own account. Hamlet means to say that petty persons like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern should not have poked their nose into the affairs of Hamlet and Claudius by accepting the commission from Claudius to the King of England for getting Hamlet executed, and that is why they have rightly suffered death for their own heinous crime.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 115—124

His definement suffers no perdition from you.....his umbrage, nothing more—When Osric talks highly of Laertes in order to excite jealousy in Hamlet, Hamlet says tauntingly that

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the character of Laertes will not suffer any loss by Osric's description of Laertes, particularly, when even a mathematician would fail to enumerate correctly all the good qualities and accomplishments of Laertes, and also because when the real qualities of Laertes can be found only in reflection or image of himself in the mirror in his own shadow that follows him whichever way he moves. Students should note here the artificial or Euphuistic style of Shakespeare which he uses only to expose John Lyly who used to write in this manner, which is not intelligible to the ordinary scholar or reader. Hamlet here compares both Osric and Laertes with ships and says that Laertes is the quicker ship than Osric in the sense that Osric's description of Laertes falls far short of the real character of Laertes.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 190—196

He did comply with his dug.....the bubbles are out—Hamlet here describes the character of Osric to Horatio. He says that Osric is most artificial and nonsensical in his expressions. He is a fool who would seek permission from his mother's breasts before sucking their milk when he was a baby. He may appear to be perfect in his manners because he has imitated all the artificialities of the human behaviour in the world ; otherwise he has not the least of real politeness or frankness about him. He is a first class hypocrite because he has been bred and brought up in the midst of artificialities of life. That is why, Osric appears to be outwardly attractive, but inwardly, he is most hateful because he has no heart. He has picked up many phrases and words which he uses and abuses in his daily intercourse with others. Hamlet, last of all, says that every word of Osric is as empty as a bubble as he himself is a bubble.

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 230—235

Not a whit, we defy augury.....to leave betimes ?—When Horatio advises him not to fight any duel with Laertes if his heart or mind does not like the idea, Hamlet says that this is a kind of superstition on Horatio's part. Hamlet assure Horatio that he is perfectly fit to fight the duel, and he believes personally that whatever Heaven or God ordains nothing can prevent it from happening as actually, with the will of God not even a single sparrow or trifling creature can live or die. Similarly, if God has ordained that Hamlet has to fight a duel with Laertes and has to win the contest or die of defeat, it is bound to happen, and nobody on earth can prevent it. He says futher when man expects a thing to happen, it does not happen ; but when he does not expect it to happen, it actually happens ; and so, nothing depends upon the will of man. This belief in the dispensation of the Providence or God is also a kind of superstition. Throughout the career of Hamlet we notice that Hamlet believes in Fate and his actions are also to a great extent governed by Fate. Therefore, how can we say, as the critics have said, that, in this play, character and not Fate is destiny or the cause of the tragedy ?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Explanation. Act 5. Sc. 2. Lines 240—255

What I have done.....and hurt my brother—King Claudius here unites the hands of Laertes and Hamlet as if they had been great enemies to each other. King Claudius pretends here that he is a great mediator and a lover of peace and friendliness although he is the man who has poisoned Laertes against Hamlet in order to save his own skin.

In these lines, Hamlet begs pardon of Laertes for having accidentally killed his father. He says that he was not in his senses when he had killed Polonius and without even knowing that it was Polonius into whose body he had thrust his sword behind the arras. Here, of course, Hamlet speaks the truth because his real suspicion was that it was Claudius when he had killed. Any how, Hamlet now says to Laertes that when he had killed Polonius in his fits of madness and also without knowing that it was Polonius he had killed, he deserves to be pardoned by Laertes. Then again, Hamlet confesses that his madness has so far proved to be his enemy, that is, the cause of his ruin ; and therefore, if madness is the cause of the death of Polonius, Hamlet has done injury to himself and not to Laertes. On that account also, Hamlet deserves to be pardoned Last of all, Hamlet frankly tells Laertes that never in his life he had thought of any kind of evil to him, and therefore, to kill his father with any motive or with consciousness was inconceivable thing. Therefore, Laertes out of his noble mind and generous thought should forgive Hamlet.

We notice in these words of Hamlet his perfect sincerity and nobleness of heart, which unfortunately we do not notice in Laertes, because, while replying to Hamlet, Laertes does not seem to feel the least compunction in pretending to be a friend to Hamlet and posing to love him and also forgive him for the death of Polonius. We feel that Laertes is mean hypocritical, and treacherous like his father ; and that is why, we do not feel anything when he is killed by the same poisoned sword with which he had designed to kill Hamlet.

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No....2722 (D)
Dated ....4../..11..2015

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pradyuman Kishen Dhar
M.A. (Pol. Sc. Eco. Eng. Hist.) B.Ed.
Motiyar Rainawari
SRINAGER-190003
KASHMIR

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Our Other Useful Publications

M. A. Classes (English Literature)

DRAMAS & DRAMATISTS : King Henry the Fourth (First Part) ; The Tempest ; Hamlet ; The Winter's Tale ; Volpone or the Foxe ; The Duchess of Malfi ; Samson Agonistes ; Edward II ; Apple Cart ; George Bernard Shaw.

POETS & POETRY : Chaucer ; Spencer ; Milton ; Pope ; Browning ; Thomas Gray : A Critical Study of His Principal Poems ; Chaucer's The Nun's Priest's Tale; A Critical Survey of Chaucer and His Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

NOVELISTS : Bunyan ; Charles Dickens.

PROSE WORKS & PROSE WRITERS : A Critical Guide to Charles Lamb and His Essays ; Essays by Francis Bacon ; Johnson.

Essentials of History of English Literature.

DEGREE CLASSES (English Literature)

DRAMAS : Macbeth ; The Merchant of Venice ; Othello ; The Winter's Tale ; As You Like it ; Arms and the Man ; Justice ; The Twelfth Night ; Julius Caesar.

POETRY: The Voice of Eternity (Notes on A.U. Pub. 38)

PROSE : Modern English Prose.

NOVELS . The Mayor of Casterbridge; Tess of the D'Urbervilles, The Return of the Native

DEGREE CLASSES (General English)

An Anthology of One Act Plays (Notes on A. U. Pub. 30) ; Men and Movements (Notes on A. U. Pub. No. 31); Great Words (Notes on A. U. Pub. No. 33) ; The Words of Wisdom (Notes on A. U. Pub. No. 32).

An Emporium of Modern English Prose (A. U.Pub. 37)

GRAMMAR, USAGE & PRECIS-WRITING, ESSAY-WRITING.

1. New Approach to English Grammar and Usage. 2. A New Approach to English Grammar, Usage & Precis-Writing. 3. A New Approach to English Grammar & Essay-Writing. 4. A New Approach to the Art of English Composition. 5. A New Approach to Precis-Writing. 6. An Emporium of English Essays. 7. A New Approach to English Grammar, Precis and Essay-Writing.

CC-0 Agamnigarh Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant